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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## Jean Anouilh: The Revival of Tragedy

DONALD HEINEY

JEAN ANOUILH (b. 1910) is often considered the leading French dramatist of the postwar generation, even though his reputation is only a dozen or so years old. It was under the peculiar conditions of the Occupation that his drama first attracted widespread public attention; *Antigone* (1942) was interpreted, as it was probably intended, as a thinly-veiled allegory of France under the Vichy regime. In America, where his work has been available since 1945, he is still relatively little known. *Antigone* is occasionally played in this country; *Ring Around the Moon*, Christopher Fry's adaptation of *l'Invitation au château*, has attracted some attention, and an adaptation of *Eurydice* has been presented to Broadway audiences under the title *A Legend of Lovers*. But the leitmotif of Anouilh's work is not widely understood; he is typically treated as a theatrical *prestidigitateur* with the expected "French" charm but with little content. This is the sort of misconception with respect to French drama that Anglo-Saxon critics have nourished even since the heyday of the Vieux Colombier. Anouilh is a psychological dramatist, although not in the modern pseudoscientific sense; he is also the chief contemporary exponent of tragedy in the drama. Most of his tragedies are based on classic themes; they are simultaneously a modern expression of

the Aristotelean tragic principle and a sensitive approach to the portrayal of psychological processes.

To Anouilh humanity is made up of two kinds of people: the anonymous mass of normal and rational nonentities who accept the banality of daily existence, and the heroes. The first group is motivated chiefly by a desire for happiness, not the ecstasy of the saint but the *petit bonheur* of the unambitious. This is the race which populates the earth and performs the daily drudgery which is the price of human existence; which "eats its sausage, makes its babies, pushes its tools, counts its sous, year in and year out, in spite of epidemics and wars, right up to life's end; living people, everyday people, people you don't imagine dead."

The second group rejects this banality. Where the ordinary man realizes the imperfection of the human lot but nevertheless grasps at the petty happiness that is offered him, the hero has the courage to say "no." It is this second race which supplies the world with saints, martyrs, Caesars, artists, assassins, prophets, and above all with tragic heroes; for the man who refuses to say "yes" to life thereby condemns

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himself to a tragic end. These are "those you imagine stretched out, pale, a red hole in the forehead, a moment triumphant with a guard of honor, or between two gendarmes. . . ." It is not that the hero deliberately chooses this path; he is condemned to it by the nature of his personality. He can no more escape tragedy than the ordinary man can escape banality. The ordinary man and the hero belong to different species, and they are condemned to perpetual misunderstanding, suspicion, and enmity; human existence is an eternal struggle between heroism and happiness. Out of this antithesis Anouilh fashions his dramatic conflict. It is significant that he includes all his Greek plays in the two collections he entitles "*pièces noires*"; to him classic mythology is indissolubly linked with tragedy and death.

In Anouilh's first *pièce noire*, *Eurydice* (1941), it is Orpheus who assumes the role of nay-sayer and chooses death for himself and Eurydice rather than compromise with banality. This is not the ordinary classic interpretation of the myth, nor is it the interpretation put upon it by most modern dramatists; yet it preserves the essence of the classic myth: a man and a woman are separated by death, the man defies Death itself to win her back, but loses her when he cannot resist the temptation to gaze straight into her soul. The décor is modern; Orpheus is an itinerant violinist who, along with his father, earns a living playing for pennies in cafes. He meets Eurydice in a railway-station buffet; she is a member of a shabby theatrical troupe which tours the provinces playing romantic melodrama to unappreciative audiences. But the instant Orpheus and Eurydice meet this sordid environment ceases to exist for them; they are hermetically

sealed in their love and nothing external can touch them.

The secondary characters, all of them invented by Anouilh, are "ordinary people": Orpheus' father, a cheerful old scalawag who has abandoned his youthful dreams of musical fame and now hopes only for three meals a day and a fire to warm his back, Eurydice's mother and her ageing lover, a pair of run-down comedians, and the shabby and lecherous impresario Dulac. Each of these people has accepted the half a loaf which life has deigned to offer them. To Orpheus and Eurydice they seem utterly loathsome; the idea that they will one day become like these people is insupportable to them. They decide to sacrifice all for love; Orpheus abandons his father, who is too old to make a living alone, and Eurydice leaves the troupe with no one to take her place. But once alone with his beloved, Orpheus develops an obsession to penetrate every secret of her soul; he begins to question her about her past. Terrified that Orpheus will discover her forced illicit relations with Dulac, Eurydice flees from the hotel and is killed in an automobile accident—a device no more fortuitous than the snake-bite of the original myth.

Anouilh then introduces a personification of Death in the form of an odd young man, M. Henri, who offers Orpheus a chance to regain Eurydice. He leads him back to the railway station of the first act where he is reunited with his lover and offered a chance to live his little history over again; the only condition is that he is not to look Eurydice straight in the eyes (i.e., symbolically, to demand the truth about her past life). But in spite of himself Orpheus begins to harass her with questions about Dulac. For a moment they stare at each other, then Eurydice ad-

mits the truth and turns reluctantly back to the realm from which Orpheus' love has rescued her.

The tragedy does not end here, however, and the reason is that Orpheus' obsession with truth has not yet brought him to his own destruction. In Act IV, chiefly devoted to discussion, M. Henri and Orpheus' father attempt to convince the nay-sayer to accept the morsel of life which remains him and to trust in the forgetfulness which time will eventually cast over the tragedy in his memory. To Orpheus this is intolerable hypocrisy; he prefers no life at all to a life which demands compromise as its price. He storms out of the hotel to seek Eurydice and death, a helpless victim of his own tragic flaw.

*Antigone* (1942) treats the same basic theme, but utilizes a different technique. Like most other modern *Antigone* plays, it is based on Sophocles; the period and décor remain that of classic Greece. But there is an anachronistic, modern element which serves to give the action an aura of timelessness. The drama is played in modern dress; Creon wears evening clothes, and the palace guards wear battle-jackets and carry automatic rifles. Such incidental anachronisms aside, the plot roughly follows Sophocles. To *Antigone* the burial of Polynices is less a religious ritual than a symbolic act she must perform in order to retain her own integrity. Creon, an intelligent and reasonable Machiavelian, tries to convince her that her project is both destructive and meaningless; one by one he refutes her reasons for wanting to throw her handful of dirt over the corpse of her brother. He forces her to admit that Polynices was almost a stranger to her in her childhood; he proves incontrovertibly that Polynices was a ne'er-do-well and prof-

ligate who wasted his money on debauchery and treated his father Oedipus without respect. To clinch his argument he confesses he is by no means sure the corpse rotting on the outskirts of the city is Polynices at all. Moreover he, Creon, has no particular opinions about the virtues of the two brothers, and is not impressed by the superstition that unburied souls are condemned to wander eternally in the nether regions. He believes in any case in letting sleeping dogs lie. He is merely trying conscientiously and doggedly (as was, it might be remarked, Marshal Pétain) to rule Thebes to the best of his ability, and he wants to keep philosophical considerations out of the technical process of government. "Thebes has a right now to a prince without a history," he remarks. "Me, I'm just Creon, thank God. I've got both feet on the ground, my hands in my pockets, and since I am king I am determined, less ambition than your father, to employ myself simply to make the world order a little less absurd, if possible. There's nothing adventurous about it, it's an everyday job, and not always fun, like all jobs. But since I've been put here to do it, I'll do it. And if tomorrow some mangy messenger should come out of the mountains to announce that he isn't quite sure of my pedigree, I would simply beg him to turn around and go back where he came from. I wouldn't have any desire to go and peer at your aunt in the face or to set myself comparing dates. Kings have other things to worry about than their personal tragedies, my dear girl."

*Antigone* replies that for Creon this position is eminently rational and just; it is, in fact, the only position he can logically maintain. He has said "yes" to life, and in doing so he has brought upon himself a whole chain of conse-

quences which force him to act as he does. As for herself—"I haven't said yes. What do you think that is to me, your politics, your necessity, your miserable stories? I can still say no to everything I don't like, and I'm the only judge. And you, with your crown and your guards and your panoply, you can only put me to death, because you have said yes." Her choice made, Antigone goes to her death and drags Hemon after her because she refuses to tell a useful lie as the price of happiness. As Creon tells Hemon toward the end of the play, Antigone was born to die; even though she herself did not realize it, Polynices was only a pretext.

Like *Antigone*, *Médée* (1946) is laid in an ostensibly classic setting modified with modern details and vernacular. The story follows Euripides' *Medea*; the major change in plot is that Anouilh's Medea dies at the end of the play to provide a more spectacular climax. Some of Anouilh's anachronisms are startling: Medea is converted to something like a gypsy who travels about in a ramshackle caravan and is forbidden entrance to the local village. "They've stuck us far enough away from their village," she complains petulantly. "They're afraid we were going to steal their chickens in the night." The celebration which marks the betrothal of Jason and Creusa is a good deal more like a Bastille Day than a pagan orgy; there are street dances, music, fried-food stalls, free wine, and a fireworks display as a climax. Medea's nurse is converted into a garrulous old French peasant, with a rough peasant craft and a healthy zest for living. "The earth is still full of good things," she tells Medea; "the sun on the bench where you rest, the hot soup for dinner, the coins you've earned laying in your

hand, and wee drop that warms your heart before you go to bed." Thus Anouilh reclothes his characters for the modern audience: the sorceress of Colchis becomes a pseudo-gypsy and her nurse a rustic gossip out of Balzac.

But Anouilh's Medea, like Orpheus and Antigone, is a heroic personality who moves in a realm apart from the rest of mankind. Her dominating passion is her love for Jason; for him she stole from her father and killed her brother, for him she committed all the other bloody crimes for which she is now treated as a pariah. To Medea this love is an absolute passion; it admits of no limits, and no other considerations have the slightest influence on her actions. When this love is betrayed there is no resignation in her heart to fill the vacuum, and she can think only of blood, revenge, and death. After thus establishing Medea as a Dionysian, virtually psychotic character, Anouilh then creates Apollonian foils to throw the character Medea into relief. Jason and his father-in-law Creon, and to some extent the nurse, are reasonable beings who have accepted the imperfections of existence; they have said "yes" to life where Medea has said no. From his marriage to Creusa, says the anti-hero Jason, he hopes for "the thing you hate more than anything in the world, the thing that's farthest from you—happiness, *le pauvre bonheur*." After thinking it over for a moment Medea agrees, and thus the catastrophe which ends the play is inevitable.

The essence of tragedy as it was understood by the ancients was that a noble hero came to his downfall through an inherent fault in his character; usually this flaw consisted of an excessive fervor or self-confidence. When



the classic tragedy demonstrates that *hybris* brings its inevitable *nemesis*, it is merely reiterating that the Dionysian personality carries within itself the seeds of its own catastrophe. This is precisely the nature of the catastrophe which arrives to the heroes of Jean Anouilh: fanatic idealists who will accept no compromise, they come to destruction because they are born into a world in which compromise is the price of existence. Most of the other tragic heroes of modern drama are not tragic in this sense; they are destroyed only because they could not achieve their ends. Anouilh passes beyond this modern pseudo-tragedy to arrive at the essence of the tragic situation, and his technique proves itself in the unmistakable emotion of *katharsis* the spectator feels at his plays.

Anouilh himself distinguishes between true tragedy and catastrophic melodrama in a curious passage he inserts into the middle of *Antigone*. While Creon muses over the mysterious burial of Polynices, the chorus comes forward and analyses the situation with a remarkable scholarly detachment. "It's nice, the tragedy. It's calm, restful. In the melodrama, with those traitors, those desperate villains, that persecuted innocence, those avengers, those Saint Bernards, those glimmers of hope, it's horrible to die, almost by accident as it were. You might have escaped, the good young man might have arrived in time with the gendarmes. In the tragedy you can relax. In the first place, you're at home—after all, everyone's innocent! It isn't that there is someone who kills and someone who is killed. It's just a question of arrangement. And then, most of all, the tragedy is calm because you know there's no hope, no dirty hope; you're caught, you're caught after all like a rat, it's all on your shoulders,

and all you can do is cry out—not groan, no, not complain—to bawl at the top of your voice what you have to say."

Tragedy should speak to us, as it spoke to the Greeks, as a living and contemporary human drama; the action should appear to involve persons like ourselves who are seen in predicaments we can understand. If this feeling of timelessness is not present, if we feel we are viewing a "historical" drama, we cannot believe the tragedy is our tragedy, and the drama degenerates into mere spectacle. Anouilh's dramas, written in modern vernacular and filled with the objects and figures of our own daily life, achieve a universality in time which would be impossible in a mere sterile imitation of the external apparatus of classicism.

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# What Ever Happened to Saroyan?

WILLIAM J. FISHER

IN 1940, William Saroyan was a national legend. At the age of thirty-three, some seven years after his first story had been published, he was a phenomenally successful author and a familiar public personality, billed as "The Great Saroyan" in the feature article of a popular magazine. Over four hundred of his stories had been published, in nine collected volumes (*The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*; *Inhale and Exhale*; *Love, Here Is My Hat*; *My Name Is Aram*, etc.) and in just about every magazine in the country—from *Harper's* and the *Yale Review* to the *New Masses*, and from *Story* and the *New Yorker* to *Redbook* and *Esquire*. Three of his plays had been produced successfully on Broadway within a span of thirteen months, and he had turned down the Pulitzer prize awarded to one of them (*The Time of Your Life*). While columnists and reporters made flamboyant copy out of his egocentric idiosyncrasies, his bons mots were being repeated in salons and saloons from coast to coast.

Saroyan not only had gained material success and popular fame; he also had become a recognized, though controversial, literary figure. Some critics were acclaiming him as the Mark Twain of the twentieth century; at least as many were denouncing him as an exhibitionist, an escapist, a slick phony, a sentimental ass, a conceited and immature hack without talent or craft. Between these extremes, Edmund Wilson wrote qualifiedly in 1940 that "at their best, his soliloquies and stories recall the spontaneous songs of one of those instinctive composers who, with no technical knowledge of music, manage to finger out lovely melodies."

Today, Saroyan is still writing, still turning out a steady stream of plays, nov-

els, stories, and radio and television scripts. But something has happened, somewhere along the way. For though Saroyan has his devotees, his fame and the quality of his work have fallen off sharply.

The story of William Saroyan's amazing success and rapid decline is, in microcosm, a history of American optimism. Saroyan rose in mid-Depression as a bard of the beautiful life, a restorer of faith in man's boundless capacities; he has declined as a troubled pseudo-philosopher, forced to acknowledge man's limitations, yet uncomfortable in the climate of Evil. Indeed, he has come to dwell on Evil in order to deny its reality, reasserting, blatantly and defensively now, the American Dream of Unlimited Possibilities and Inevitable Progress. As a self-styled prophet of a native resurgence—believing in the virtue of self-reliant individualism, in the innate goodness of man and the rightness of his impulses—he has followed the tradition of American transcendentalism. (One critic has quite seriously called Saroyan the creator of "the new transcendentalism.") But it need hardly be said that Saroyan is no Emerson, either by temperament or by talent. The extent to which his later work has failed reflects, in one sense, the inadequacy of his equipment for the task he set himself. Yet it is also true that Saroyan is the representative American of the mid-twentieth-century, a man baffled at the failure of the Dream but unwilling to give it up; incapable of facing his dilemma frankly or of articulating it meaningfully.

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When Saroyan's stories began appearing in the early 1930's, the literature of the day was somber with gloom or protest. And though Saroyan's fiction was also born of the Depression, often telling of desperate men, of writers dying in poverty, it nevertheless managed a dreamy affirmation. Politically and economically blind, Saroyan declared himself bent on a one-man crusade in behalf of the "lost imagination in America." In an era of group-consciousness, he was "trying to restore man to his natural dignity and gentleness." "I want to restore man to himself," he said. "I want to send him from the mob to his own body and mind. I want to lift him from the nightmare of history to the calm dream of his own soul."

This concept of restored individuality governed Saroyan's principal attitudes, his impulsive iconoclasm as well as his lyrical optimism. While Saroyan joined the protestants in damning the traditional villains—war, money, the success cult, standardization—he was really attacking the depersonalization which such forces had effected. He was just as much opposed to regimentation in protest literature as in everyday life. ("Everybody in America is organized except E. E. Cummings," he complained.) Writing about foreigners and exiles, the meek and isolated, "the despised and rejected," he celebrated the "kingdom within" each man. The artists in his stories preserved a crucial part of themselves; there was spiritual survival and triumph, let economics fall where it might. And in the glowing stories about men close to the earth of their vineyards, about glad children and fertile, generous women, Saroyan was affirming what he called the "poetry of life" and exalted with capital-letter stress: Love, Humor, Art, Imagination, Hope, Integrity.

In effect, Saroyan was restoring the perspective without which the writers of the thirties had often (for obvious reasons) reduced the individual potential to a materialism of physical survival. When

a character in one of his plays insisted that food, lodging, and clothes were the only realities, another responded, "What you say is true. The things you've named are all precious—if you haven't got them. But if you have, or if you can get them, they aren't." However limiting Saroyan's simplifications might prove, they none the less contained important truths which had been lost sight of amidst the earnestness of agitation-propaganda. If Saroyan is given any place in future literary histories, he should be credited with helping to relax ideologically calcified attitudes.

Saroyan began writing plays in 1938. By 1942, he had completed six full-length plays and sixteen one-acters, and four of them (*My Heart's in the Highlands*, *The Time of Your Life*, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, *The Beautiful People*) had been produced on Broadway. Saroyan had become, for the moment, an important force in the American theatre—a symbol and an inspiration to playwrights, actors, and audiences. He had come to stand not only for personal freedom after the years of economic and emotional austerity, but also for freedom in style and form.

Whereas Saroyan's stories were often reminiscent of Mark Twain, Sherwood Anderson, or John Steinbeck, there was no recognizable literary tradition behind his playwriting. Rather, it was the showmanship and theatricality of the popular entertainers, made euphonious and articulate, that went into these early plays. "I take pride," Saroyan wrote, "in having sneaked into every theatre in my home town [Fresno, California] . . . ; into every circus that came to town; into the County Fairs; into the Summer stock company shows." He had developed a decided preference for vaudeville over Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and the other "serious dramatists" because it was "easygoing, natural, and American."

Thus, his best works for the stage gave the impression of a jamboree which was springing to life spontaneously, right before one's eyes. The inhibitions of both

stage people and audience were lifted by a mood of gentle intoxication (sometimes alcoholic, sometimes not). The impulse to play and sing and dance was given free rein without concern for plot or didactic point. In *The Time of Your Life*, a dancer, a boogie-woogie pianist, and a harmonica-player were casually introduced and as casually allowed to go through their paces. The children in the plays were instructed by the stage directions to enjoy themselves as children do—turn somersaults, whistle, stand on their heads, and the like.

Saroyan's element, indeed, was the flexible time of childhood; he was at his best when writing about dreams fulfilled and faith justified. He was a teller of joyful tales and tales of high sentiment, making a revel of life and lyricizing death, hardship, and villainy.

But not long after the peak of his success at the beginning of the forties, Saroyan's writing began to change. Concerned about the onesidedness of his outlook, he set out to *justify* his unadulterated hopefulness. Instead of the airy, uncontested supremacy of beauty and happiness, there were now, as Saroyan began to see things, misery and ugliness to contend with, imperfection to account for. At the same time that he took cognizance of the dark side of life, he began trying to *prove* all for the best in the best of all possible worlds, with the result that his novels and plays became strange battlegrounds where belief struggled with skepticism. To retain his perfectionist version of man's life on earth, yet to get rid of the unpleasant realities he had come to acknowledge—this was Saroyan's new burden. Recently, in *The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills*, he has described his dilemma quite frankly, revealing the roots of an incurable, an implacable, optimism:

Most of the time I felt that man was rightfully wonderful and dignified but had had these profound and powerful aspects of his nature driven out of him by something or other. Upon trying to understand what

it was that had driven man away from himself I ran into grave difficulty. . . .

I wanted him to be wonderful.

I wanted his life—the minutes and years straight from birth to death—to be easy, joyous, loving, and intelligent.

I wanted his death—or his end—to come as a benediction.

I believed all this *could* happen, could be *made* to come to pass.

[Saroyan's italics]

Among the earliest works to demonstrate that Saroyan was no longer able to dismiss "evil" casually or to proclaim "belief" summarily was his first novel, *The Human Comedy* (which Saroyan wrote originally as a motion picture in 1943). The protagonist was Saroyan's favorite character type—a young dreamer with untainted senses, a rich imagination, and warm sympathies. Instead of following the old blithe Saroyanesque line, however, the book became a study in doubt and faith, tracing prophetically the pattern of Saroyan's own career. The young hero, a Western Union messenger, is nearing the age of disenchantment and is especially vulnerable because he has been nourished on inflated ideals and has never been allowed to know adversity. His trust in the benevolence of the universe is consequently threatened when his personal idol, an older brother, goes off to war and faces death.

The outcome is abrupt and arbitrary, as Saroyan contrived to dissolve the conflict with a happy ending. The brother is killed in the war, and the boy is about to plunge into despair when, before mourning can get under way, a wounded buddy of the dead soldier—fortuitously an orphan without ties—appears on the scene and quite literally takes the brother's place in the household as if nothing had happened. Saroyan explained this miracle by inflating his idea of brotherliness into a concept of universal oneness which permits live men to be substituted for dead ones. Since "none of us is separate from any other," according to the logic of the novel, and

since "each man is the whole world, to make over as he will," the stranger is able to become at once the son, brother, and lover that his friend had been. It is as simple as this because Saroyan is running the show. Death and disaster are ruled out of order, and the boy's illusions are protected.

But Saroyan was paying a high price for the preservation of unlimited possibilities. This novel had lost all but a modicum of the Saroyanesque buoyancy. In the course of thwarting misfortune, the author had to let the boy abandon his pranks and dreams to face the prospect of sorrow. Meanwhile, there was a moral point that had to be reinforced by sermons on virtue. Large doses of speculative talk adulterated the dreamy atmosphere. Always inclined toward sentimentality, Saroyan now landed with both feet deep in mush. By dwelling on the love and goodness he had previously taken with a skip and a holler, Saroyan was suffocating spontaneity.

In a recent radio interview on India's neutrality in American-Soviet affairs, Henry Cassidy of N.B.C. asked Mme. Pandit whether one did not have to decide once and for all which side was *right* and which side was *wrong*. "Only an American could have asked that question," replied Mme. Pandit. The fact that this concept of the mutual exclusiveness of good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly has become an underlying assumption in Saroyan's struggle against disbelief is evidence of his "Americanism."

As Saroyan's success receded, a tart defiance began to sour his public personality. In an effort to defy financial backers who were now shying away from his plays because of weak scripts and uncertain box-office appeal, Saroyan, in the summer of 1942, embarked on an independent venture called "The Saroyan Theatre," devoted to the presentation on a repertory basis of the dramatic works of William Saroyan, with Saroyan as di-

rector, producer, and financial sponsor. The project closed six days after it opened, the impressario loudly blaming everybody connected with the production except himself. It was about this time that Saroyan wrote, "Listen to Saroyan. Ignore his critics. Spit in their eyes."

Within a few months after this debacle, Saroyan was drafted into the Army. After almost three years of resentful desk-service as a private, a period during which he did no writing—in protest against his being conscripted when he should have been serving humanity as a civilian writer—he recorded his angry sentiments in a diary (*The Adventures of William Saroyan*) and a novel (*The Adventures of Wesley Jackson*). The books were weighted down with aimless vitriol about the indignities of war and the Army; and in attempting to write seriously about statesmanship, propaganda, and international affairs, Saroyan exposed to full view his lack of intellectual discipline and integrative capacity.

Saroyan has perennially boasted an aesthetics of no-effort, denouncing "intellectualism" and contending that a man should write as a hen lays eggs—instinctively, without thought or planning. Confusing laziness with casualness and spontaneity, he has continued to oversimplify. Part of Saroyan's charm had been the way he had often, in his enthusiasm about everyday things and people, blurred but intensified the lines of his picture with superlatives: "The loveliest looking mess the girl had ever seen"; "nature at its proudest, driest, loneliest, and loveliest"; "the crazy, absurd, magnificent agreement." But when, in his later work, he applied this indiscriminate approach to questions of morality and metaphysics, the effect became one of pretentiousness. With sweeping generalizations, he now implied that he was solving man's weightiest problems, yet without evidence of any careful or systematic consideration. He has his characters discuss matters like illusion-and-reality, the temporal flux,



and immortality, and dismiss them—"resolved"—with a flick of a phrase, as off-handedly as they would formerly have bought a bag of jelly beans. The allegorical scheme he concocted for *Jim Dandy* was more ambitious than Thornton Wilder's in *The Skin of Our Teeth*. The assumption of Saroyan's play, as of Wilder's, was that "everybody in it had survived pestilence, famine, ignorance, injustice, inhumanity, torture, crime, and madness." But instead of a cohesive drama about man's survival through history by the skin of his teeth, Saroyan wrote an incoherent hodge-podge in which everything turns out just jim dandy, as if there had never been a serious threat at all.

When his one-act play *Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning* was published, Saroyan offered the following reassurance to anyone who might be puzzled by it: "This play isn't going to be the same for every person who sees it. Two times two is the same for everybody, but one never is, and you start to understand everything when you start to understand one. One of everything. That's what art goes after. The whole. The works. One." Saroyan's efforts to provide clarification have often had this tendency to eliminate all distinctions, reducing meaning to some amorphous unit—if not to a cipher. In his yearning for a harmony, for an eradication of conflicts and contradictions, Saroyan is the heir of a tradition which, among Americans of a more reflective or mystical temperament, has included Jefferson's ideal of human perfectibility, Emerson's Oversoul, Whitman's multitudinous Self, Henry Adams' Lady of Chartres, and Waldo Frank's "Sense of the Whole."

In 1949, there appeared a volume of three full-length plays by William Saroyan, his major works for the theatre since the war. None of these plays—*Don't Go Away Mad*; *Sam Ego's House*; *A Decent Birth, a Happy Funeral*—has been given a Broadway production. In-

deed so vaguely speculative are they that their author found it necessary to explain them in lengthy prefaces summarizing the plots and offering suggestions for deciphering the allegories. The pseudo-philosophical elements of Saroyan's writing had come more than ever to overshadow the vivid and the colorful.

Moreover, the preoccupation with death virtually excludes every other consideration, especially in *A Decent Birth, a Happy Funeral* and in *Don't Go Away Mad*. The action of the latter is set in a city hospital ward for cancer victims, and the characters are all "incurables," tortured by pain and by thoughts of their impending doom. While they clutch at prospects of the slightest delay, they brood over the crises and deaths of fellow inmates and talk endlessly about death, life, time, and the details of their physiological decadence. Yet even here, in these plays about death, Saroyan has conjured up endings of joy, for which he offers this revealing justification in the preface to *A Decent Birth*. . . :

The tone of the play being reasonable rather than emotional, I felt justified in permitting the show-off not to have been killed, for he is the artist, and art goes on forever. I felt justified in not having the child die, or be sickly, or crippled. I know that a man who is said to be dead is more often than not dead. I know that mothers frequently die in childbirth, and that infants are frequently born dead, ill, or crippled. In short, I know exasperating, surprising, and terrible things do happen, but I chose not to make anything of this in this play.

To negate death has thus become for Saroyan the crucial test of man's free will and unlimited powers. Sometimes, instead of whisking it away by plot manipulations, he has tried to exorcise death by comic ritual, to be as airy about morbidity as he had been about little boys turning somersaults. (Many social analysts have noted the uneasy effort in America to euphemize death, glamorize it,

(Continued on page 385)

# The Victorian Wasteland

CURTIS DAHL

IN RECENT years much has been written about the "wasteland" poets of the early twentieth century. But it should not be forgotten that the Victorians also used wasteland imagery with great effectiveness to express their melancholy moods. Thomas Hardy, for instance, in his somber majestic heath represents the vast and unchanging reality around man that inescapably shapes his destiny. Oscar Wilde starkly paints the waste courtyard of Reading Gaol and sees in its bareness the bitter irony of the love that kills. William Morris depicts sodden hopelessness in the dreary landscape of *The Haystack in the Floods* and the emptiness of all experience in *The Hollow Land*. The turbid longings and passionate regrets in the strange house Wuthering Heights echo in the accents of Heathcliff across Emily Bronte's barren moors. Arthur Hugh Clough in the lyric *Say Not that the Struggle Nought Availeth* compares life to a battle on smoky ground beside tired waves and hopes bravely for the rising of the sun. The best examples of Victorian wasteland poetry, however, are to be found in poems by Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, and Thomson. In an analysis of the meaning with which each of these poets invests his wasteland, comparisons to the early or "wasteland" poems (not the later poems) of T. S. Eliot are inevitable.

## I

In Tennyson's *The Holy Grail*, the eighth of the *Idylls of the King*, the dry and rocky "land of sand and

thorns" through which Percivale rides in search of the Grail represents the difficult road which a man searching for an other-worldly ideal must traverse. The mortal world seems dry and thorny to those who have a thirst too spiritual for its waters to quench. Dust swirls up from the wasteland, and lightnings without rain strike. But the road is not one that all men must travel. It is a way consciously chosen by knights in opposition to Arthur's wishes. For all ordinary men, even for ordinary knights of the Table Round, it is a lonely and barren path. Only the saintly Galahad's perfect purity gives him the vision that transforms the simple chapel where he and Percivale pray into the resting place of the Holy Grail. He has a sacred calling that draws him toward the Holy City over bridges that vanish for Percivale. The wasteland for him is not as for the others a place of drought and thirst. But even Percivale, though he is pure enough to glimpse the Grail's radiance, finds it a lonely and waterless tract. He is left in the dry thorns, while other even less dedicated knights find only death in the black swamp. Their bones whiten the edge. It is only the exceptionally godlike who can pierce through the wasteland to reach the Holy City or even catch a gleam of the light of salvation. For most men the attempt, as Arthur predicts, leads to failure or death.

Thus Tennyson through Arthur

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warns ordinary men to avoid the spiritual wasteland that lies before men who search for mystic salvation outside the duties of the mortal world. Too intense, too unworldly idealism, too complete spirituality will turn ordinary life, as it does for Percivale (and indeed also for the hypocritical St. Simeon), to dust. For Arthur and for Tennyson the realities of life on earth are not waste, are not dry and bare. They only appear so to men whose eyes are dazzled by a divine radiance too bright for earth. Some few men are Galahads who should follow the quest; but most men are Lancelots who despite their sins should help to build the kingdom of God on earth, to serve mankind rather than follow an ideal of religion apart from the practicalities of ordinary living. To see human life as a desert, as Percivale does, is wrong. This view is obviously in sharp contrast with T. S. Eliot's implication in *The Waste Land* (which also makes use of the Grail legend) that every man should seek in the waste the rose of salvation watered by the streams of grace. For Eliot the death of the Fisher King can alone bring fertility to the wasteland; for Tennyson, King Arthur, who represents the earthly ideal, must live in order that life may bloom. For both poets there is a desert in the garden and a garden in the desert, but Tennyson would make the desert blossom like the rose by causing men to live and work in the mortal world, while Eliot sees fertility for the wasteland only in the death-bringing search for the Grail or the sacramental death of the Fisher King.

In contrast, the "dark strait of barren land" where the final battle in the mist takes place in *The Passing of Arthur*, represents in part Tennyson's vision of a world in which ideals seem

to have failed. Arthur's great kingdom has apparently come to naught; even his last knight Sir Bedivere is in the final scene almost unfaithful. God still seems to speak through nature, "in the shining of the stars" and the "flowering of His fields," but man's destiny is a dark barren land of mist and uncertainty, blasphemy and strife. The wasteland symbolizes, as it does also for Clough and for Arnold, the intellectual and spiritual battlefields of Tennyson's time. Nothing can be seen clearly; one knows not who is on one's side; and when the bitter wind comes at evening, all is desolate. Even religion and faith, symbolized by the ruined chapel and broken cross, are in decay.

At first this wasteland appears as barren as that of any modern poet. Yet it is a wasteland in which heroism and victory, even though in a cause apparently lost, are possible. Arthur has won his present battle: Modred lies dead before him. And because one last knight is faithful to him, Arthur can live to come again and reclaim the wasteland in some future age. Tennyson does not, as Eliot might, have Arthur find redemption in the ruined chapel. The dying King is carried away from the chapel toward a body of water much larger than that in the holy font, a body of living water in nature itself. Salvation for Tennyson springs from a broader change than that brought about by any merely sacramental or personal cleansing. Tennyson reads hope of God's protean love even in the dreary panorama of a battlefield seemingly waste. After the clouds of doubt have blown away, God's stars shine.

## II

In Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, the significance of the wasteland, the "stubbed ground"

and "stark black dearth" and "fell cirque," is related to the theme of going forward bravely at any cost, even death. Just as in *Prospice* there is one last battle to be fought before the victory of death can be attained, so at the end of his search Childe Roland has a final test. To be loyal to his quest he must traverse the barren waste that lies in the shadow of the valley of death. Like the rotted oaks in *The Holy Grail*, like the broken pillar in Eliot's *The Hollow Men*, everything here speaks of what has been and is now no longer. This land has not always been desert. The stubbed ground was "once a wood"; the horrid engine once had a use; the horse now blind probably belonged formerly to some other questing knight. The changing of the former natural beauty to a wasteland seems the work of a moody fool, as haphazard as Caliban's slaying the twenty-first crab. Thus the lowness, the "mute despair," the treacherous and "suicidal" qualities of this land represent those unexplained shiftings of good to evil which confront all men as they pass through life.

*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* is not, however, a gloomy poem. Browning is not focussing his attention on the wasteland any more than in *How They Brought the Good News* he is principally interested in the route from Ghent to Aix. The scrubby, blotchy land through which he rides and the mysterious tower itself are merely trials to test his strength. The one question is whether Childe Roland is fit for the supreme strife. He abhors the land from the depths of his soul; he senses its evilness and thinks that the river may have been "a bath for the fiend's glowing hoof." But every black eddy of the stream, every staring bone of the horse, every cocklebur and thistle of the land is there for the pur-

pose of bringing out the best in him. Because he keeps his courage to the end, because like the Grammarian he triumphs over his wasteland, every horrid aspect of it becomes a thing of good and glory for him. The wasteland leads to the divine land of promise.

In contrast to Eliot's, Browning's wasteland is one that can be conquered by man's unaided courage. No sacrament of purgation, no specifically religious rite of atonement is needed, nor can the suffering and victory be vicarious. Here the rats of decay can be killed by a knight's spear. Instead of being a land dry in its lack of spiritual insight, this is a tract into which only those with clear eyes and a definite purpose enter. Roland does not wander in the waste because he knows no ford into richer country; he is dedicated from the start to seek out the Dark Tower. At the close of the poem he may seem to fail, but in enduring to the end he has truly conquered. And though the divine spark in him is his individual courage, because like Percivale he is a member of a pledged Band his victory has more than only individual significance. Eliot's Magi, after a long hard journey through hostile lands, feel in the end only bitter discontent and a sense of alienation from their fellows. Roland, however, in the "fell cirque" before the blind tower experiences a sense of glorious fellowship with Cuthbert and Giles and the other knights who have fought, successfully or unsuccessfully, before him. With their voices in his ears and with the slug horn sounding, he approaches the end. For Browning the wasteland is a field of victory.

### III

Matthew Arnold's wasteland is not usually a place of victory but a dry unproductive present age between two

more noble eras, "one dead/The other powerless to be born." In *Rugby Chapel*, however, two kinds of wasteland appear. One is the land of eddying dust, comparable to that of *The Hollow Men*, where most men aimlessly mill. But Arnold in the poem is much more interested in those stronger men whose tragedy is not lack of ideals but unrealized ideals. To represent their struggle he uses, like Eliot, the image of a harsh journey through mountains—

The road winding among mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water.

Unlike Eliot, however, Arnold postulates a "clear-purposed goal," a City of God certainly known and accepted though ignored by most men. He believes in a sure ideal at the bound of the waste, not a ruined Jerusalem or Athens or Alexandria with falling towers. Arnold's hope lies in social order and unity, and his City of God may be on earth rather than in heaven. Arnold believes, furthermore, in heroes especially endowed with the strength and courage to lead the straggling line of mankind through the mountains. Indeed, the wasteland may perhaps have been created in part to give opportunity to such human yet divinely inspired leadership. While Eliot sees salvation and rebirth in the mystic rose or in rain from heaven, Arnold finds it in social action in obedience to great human leaders. Eliot seems to show no certain faith in anything except salvation for the individual. His men wander in the wasteland one by one; each must himself seek divine grace. Thus for Eliot the wasteland is a place of almost passive endurance. For Arnold it is a path of active, unselfish, almost military struggle. In one there is only dry rock; in the other there are cataracts and avalanches and a lonely inn among the

clouds where a "gaunt and taciturn host" welcomes the weary.

*Dover Beach* is more characteristic of the bulk of Arnold's poetry. On the "naked shingles" of the darkling strand Arnold feels himself isolated from the intellectual and moral standards of those around him. Like a child reared in an old abbey garden, like Mycerinus retired to his secluded castle, Arnold sees from afar the banners passing and sighs for lost palaces beneath the sea. The great ages of the past are gone; those of the future have not yet come; and the present is a darkling plain on which ignorant armies clash by night. Arnold does not, like Tennyson, identify himself with one of the combatants or imply that the struggle, however confused, is a noble one. Like the Greek in mournful awe before the fallen Runic stone, like the Carthusian monk in a world that has forgotten faith, he stands aloof and merely comments on the "strange disease of modern life" with its "sick hurry" and "divided aims." He is saddened by what he sees, but he knows that only in clarity and detachment of vision does hope lie.

Is this wasteland not comparable to MacLeish's in *The Too-Late Born*? The modern poet, though come too late to take part in the battle, has at least heard the echoes of the mighty horn of Roland in the passages of Spain. Yet, though warriors like Roland existed in the past, they have fought only to suffer defeat. While Arnold finds the ebbled sea of faith still sadly tossing the pebbles on the beach, and the battle on the plain still in progress, MacLeish some seventy years later knows that whatever was heroic in the past was defeated in the past. He finds only

The dead against the dead and on the silent  
ground  
The silent slain.



In the modern poet there is little of Arnold's belief that an age of expansion will follow one of concentration, that the hard dry earth of the wasteland holds seeds from past eras that with cultivation can blossom again.

## IV

Though in his pantheistic poem *On the Downs* Swinburne sees the barren stretches of the downs as imbued with the same life that is within us and therefore as understandable phases of a living whole, a more characteristic use of wasteland imagery is to be found in *A Forsaken Garden*. In the deserted garden overlooking the sea the flower beds are "blossomless," the walks bare, the seed plots dry and thorny. The roses that once grew there and the nightingale that once sang there have disappeared. The only lasting forces are those of change and destruction: the sea-wind still blowing over the dry garden, the sea still eating at the base of the cliff until the wasteland itself topple into the waves. Love, like the roses, will perish; the lovers who once walked in the garden have gone to the grave. Existence is thus a wasteland, "a round where life seems barren as death," and in death itself there is no hope. The only alleviation of despair is the prospect that the never-ceasing billows of purposeless change will at last bring the peace of complete oblivion. Then death itself will lie dead.

Thus in *A Forsaken Garden*, as in the *Hymn to Proserpine*, *The Last Oracle*, and many parts of the trilogy on Mary Stuart, Swinburne is lamenting the decay of a past of beauty and passion in comparison to which the present seems barren. The chaplets of Apollo and Venus, the laurels of Ronsard and the Pléiade, the roses in the forsaken garden have withered; only

their thorns are left. That these flowers may have been blossoms of lust and sadism only increases Swinburne's regret for them; the deepest vice to him seems infinitely preferable to insensitive, over-moral philistinism. It is, indeed, probably the triumph of Christian virtue over pagan sensuality and aestheticism that causes the wasteland. Swinburne does not believe that a return to pagan beauty and freedom can ever be achieved; the roses can never bloom again. But he receives a kind of negative comfort in his confidence that time eventually will destroy even the wasteland of Christian ethics. Proserpine, goddess of eternal death, gathers all things to herself; the blossoms of the sea will continue to bloom when the forsaken garden has disappeared far beneath its waves.

Swinburne's scale of values is clarified when it is compared to the almost directly contradictory scale of Eliot. The rose, symbol for Eliot of Christian salvation, is for Swinburne the symbol of the raptures of pagan vice. Eliot's wasteland is dry because Christian ideals have not penetrated to it, Swinburne's because Christian ethics have devastated it. Eliot finds in the wasteland too many Sweeneys controlled by their coarse sexual appetites; Swinburne sees life a wasteland largely because the beauty of sexual passion has been suppressed. Like Eliot, Swinburne finds the inner essential truth of existence hidden seed—like in the dry ground of a waste garden. However, the truth he finds is not the saving grace of Christianity; instead it is merely the empty comfort that all things are inevitably swept away by the tides of fate. This very insistence on the foreordained destruction of even the thorns of life by the blind surging forces of change gives a dignity to Swinburne's

wasteland that much of the modern wasteland lacks. For instance, there is a passion in Mary Stuart's revolt against the land of Knox that is nowhere echoed by Eliot's Magi, who on their return find that they too have become strangers in their own land. Mary has faith at least in her own twisted standards, in the delight of cruel love, and in the consciousness of her deadly power, but the Magi, though they have seen the miracle, are still unsatisfied. Sexual desire itself in Swinburne has a certain nobility since it leads to beauty and courage even when it is adulterous or masochistic. It does not end in the sordid amours of *The Fire Sermon* or the shallow hesitation of Prufrock. The eternal sea swirling at the beetling cliff beneath the forsaken garden has majesty and power. For the Victorians great forces are in the world, even though they may be forces for evil. These call forth violent protest or vehement adulation. The modern wasteland, on the contrary, is often a place of doubt and hesitation. With Swinburne, for instance, we course the barren but beautiful moors of Northumberland riding vigorously against the sea-born wind. With Eliot we dance around the prickly pear at five o'clock in the morning.

# V

Through the huge, dark, silent, partly ruined metropolis that in *The City of Dreadful Night* James Thomson describes as lying in a "trackless wilderness" between the "waste marches" of a river and "moorland dark" and "stony ridges," he expresses an unrelieved and hopeless pessimism far deeper even than the sometimes posed gloominess of Swinburne. In Thomson's great city, the edges of which disappear into the illimitable

darkness, there is not even the comfort of inevitable oblivion. In this city faith has been poisoned, love stabbed, and hope starved. If God exists, he is malignant; if not, we are ruled eternally by purposeless, unthinking Chance. Even death is no refuge, for hell itself denies entrance to the hopeless. Mighty ruins around the city hint a better past, but we cannot return to it. We belong nowhere.

In many respects Thomson's wasteland is like that of the twentieth century poets. The pall of dark despair over the city is paralleled in Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* and by the "brown fog of a winter noon" over the "unreal city" of London in *The Waste Land*. Like Eliot's Hollow Men we wander in darkness between heaven and hell. But there is a difference. Though dreary, life in the City of Dreadful Night is never so small and coarse or so cheaply sinister as that pictured by Eliot's *Preludes* or *Gerontion*. The dark river that winds by Thomson's towers of despair is not a Thames filled with dead dogs and orange peels. It is a calm and mighty and deep river. It flows from the depths of the human soul into a boundless ocean of meaningless misery. It is water that allays no thirst but of which every man must drink. Thomson reaches nearly the ultimate in despair. Of modern poets perhaps only E. A. Robinson equals his futilitarian power. But just as Eliot in his attacks on modern life always implies values he would like to see restored, even Robinson in *Credo* feels the vague "coming glory of the Light." Furthermore, Richard Cory going home one fine summer's day, Ben Jonson chatting about his friend from Stratford, and Mr. Flood holding his party on the hill display a stoical, sometimes almost humor-



ous acceptance of the apparent nothingness of life that differs from Thomson's intense protest. Thomson does not wander calmly through his wasteland. He feels its terrors to the full, sees fiends in every somber shadow, and pours out through his imagery a passionate and personal anguish. Though he searches for light, though he intensely questions all he meets, he finds only dreadful night. His sole comfort is that he need not even to himself keep up the pretense of courage, for though he is one of the inhabitants of a great city, no one cares about him.

Writers in all centuries have compared their worlds to wastelands. Ezekiel writes of the Valley of Dry Bones. Vergil's Aeneas traverses the misty plains of the dark underworld. Dante's "indifferent" wander aimlessly in shadows. Milton pictures Christ tempted in the wilderness, while Shakespeare por-

trays Lear storm-wracked on a bleak and desolate heath. Bunyan's Pilgrim trudges a dark path through the blasted Valley of the Shadow of Death. Each age has invested the wasteland image with its own meaning. The wasteland of the Victorian poets is on the whole more dignified, more static in significance, more restrained in regard to sex, more specifically social rather than individual, and more nostalgic toward the past than that of most twentieth century poets. Nevertheless, the dry rocks and wasted vegetation of the cactus land were as vital and meaningful symbols to the generation of Arnold and Tennyson as they are to that of Eliot and MacLeish. The wasteland, often thought to be a modern discovery, had been thoroughly explored by the Victorians before the twentieth century was born.

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*"The quality of man's life nowadays depends largely on the quality of what he reads. . . . Unless he is an exceptionally strong minded person, he will read newspapers and possibly novels without very close attention, uncritically, and off his guard; and as a result he may gradually and unconsciously take over the ideas and attitudes of those who write for him. In time he may become incapable of thinking or feeling for himself; he will live at second hand. . . . The supply of reading matter is now almost entirely a matter of commerce; to pay it must sell widely, and there is a tendency for a writer to appeal to the cheapest thoughts and feelings. Much of the reading matter in wide circulation is thus rather worse than useless. . . . What one reads matters more today than ever before, but discrimination is harder than ever to acquire."*

Denys Thompson in *Reading and Discrimination*

# Preparing Teachers of English

## To Teach All of the Children of All of the People

ALFRED H. GROMMON

I AGREE with the Harvard Committee's statement in its report, *General Education in a Free Society*, that the study of literature is the "central humanistic study." Consequently, I believe that teachers of English should know the books which, as expressed by the Harvard Committee, "have been the great meeting points and have most influenced the men who have in turn influenced others. . . ."<sup>1</sup> They should know also, of course, how to transmit to our younger generations this cultural heritage recorded in literature.

And as a humanist, I believe that the proper study of mankind is Man, but not only of Man as already recorded in books. I believe that the humanistic teacher of English must also study that segment of mankind now attending our secondary schools. It seems to me that our basic problem as educators of the prospective teachers of English is to equip the college student not only to teach the many aspects of English as a school subject but also to be able to teach this important subject to all of the children of all of the people.

As a teacher of a subject required of all students in our secondary schools, the teacher of English is immediately confronted by such major crises in our mass education today as: (1) the conduct of adolescents; (2) the serious conflicts between values held by teach-

ers and those by other groups; (3) the frightening growth of anti-intellectualism in America; (4) the reaction of the public and the colleges to the abilities, interests, and behavior of the graduates of our secondary schools; and (5) the almost overpowering complexities created by crowded schools, shortage of teachers, and excessive teaching and advisory loads. I should like to discuss briefly some of the implications these crises have for those of us who are trying to educate prospective teachers of English.

The theme for today's program is "How rich is our bounty! Utilizing our wealth of research, experience, and creative imagination in teaching English." Our teachers of English are privileged to give generously from our rich bounty to our nation's most precious treasure: our youth. Yet some reports on our youth alarm us.

Teachers know, of course, that most of our young men and women are decent, law-abiding citizens; many are conscientious students in our classes. Nevertheless, the percentage of our

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<sup>1</sup>*General Education in a Free Society*, Report of the Harvard Committee (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 108.

youth who recklessly, wilfully flout the conventions and laws of our society is skyrocketing. According to Mr. Richard Clendenen, Executive Director of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, "The volume of juvenile delinquency [in the U.S.] has increased more than 40% . . . between 1948 and 1953. By 1960, over a million and a half youngsters will be in trouble with the law each year unless we are able to reverse the trend."<sup>2</sup> Another report states that ". . . teenagers are now responsible for 4 of every 100 murders, 15 of every 100 rapes, half of all robberies. In one year, 66 Pittsburgh, Pa., teachers were assaulted by their students."<sup>3</sup> Who is going to reverse this distressing trend in juvenile behavior? And how is this reversal to be achieved? Whatever the percentage of juvenile delinquency may be and whoever these youngsters are, those who are attending school are undoubtedly enrolled in English classes. Certainly the teacher of English can not ignore his responsibility. Nor can those who are preparing teachers of English.

The causes of juvenile delinquency are complex and are inextricably enmeshed with current conditions and forces extending far beyond the scope of the school. Yet almost every day, the teacher of English is involved in some important forces which shape adolescents' behavior. Some of these factors are the following: the conflict between teenagers' need of independence and compulsory attendance in school, including an English class; the conflict between the values prized by teenagers and the values represented by the

school, the teacher, and the subject of English; and the conflict created by the irresistible appeal of television, radio, moving pictures, and automobiles competing with such homework assignments as reading and writing. These conflicts affect the attitudes and conduct of many students enrolled in English classes. Consequently, English teachers must try to understand what is going on in the lives of adolescents and to treat and teach these youngsters accordingly.

But, unfortunately, even the background of many teachers may prevent them from understanding some students. In our society, most teachers apparently come from farm and business families and from families who are members of one of two Protestant denominations. Yet, these teachers' students represent all socio-economic classes and many religious groups in our society.<sup>4</sup> What happens, then, when conflicts arise in an English class because the students and teachers do not recognize that they may be living by different sets of values? To what extent do these conflicts drive students out of school before they are graduated? According to a report in *The New York Times* of February 4, 1953, 44% of the young men and women who should have been graduated from the public high schools of New York State in June, 1952, had already dropped out of school. What drove almost one-half of the freshmen of 1948 away from school during the next two or three years?

Perhaps, too, these conflicts over values show not only adolescents' atti-

<sup>2</sup>"Why Teen-agers Go Wrong," *U.S. News & World Report*, September 17, 1954, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup>"Teenage Savagery," *See*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January, 1955) p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Warner, Lloyd: Havighurst, Robert J.; Martin B. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers) 1944, pp. 101-102.

tudes toward school and our difficulties in understanding our students. May they not also manifest their parents' increased anti-intellectualism? At the very time when more and more Americans are attending secondary schools and colleges, when greater sums than ever are being spent to educate the mass of our population, an apparently growing number of people ironically lack respect for the educated man. And although we as a nation are dedicated to education, we are not dedicated to respect or support educators. What is the proper role of the teacher of English as the chief purveyor of a liberal education, in helping our youth acquire not only the elements of a liberal education but also respect for learning and the learned?

Seriously complicating the English teacher's attending to all of these matters and the many others even more directly related to his job of teaching a particular subject are the excessive demands upon his energy and time. Commonly, he is assigned five or six classes a day, has to prepare lessons for three or four different kinds of classes daily, has twenty-five to forty students in each class, has to supervise a study hall or student club, teach all of these students to speak, write, listen, and read—read approximately 30,000 words of students' themes each week, know and teach all types of literary selections in world, English, and American literature dating from about 400 B.C. to the present. In effect, he as an individual must be to this high school and community what the entire English department, with its many specialists, is to the college community. And, finally, he will be expected to conserve enough energy, enthusiasm, and patience from the day's bout with the foregoing responsibilities

to serve after school as director of the senior play, as adviser to the staffs of the school newspapers and yearbook, as chaperon for school parties, as coach of some sport, and as worker with the PTA, church groups, Red Cross, service clubs, and Youth Centers.

What, then, can the colleges do to educate the teacher of English who is expected to be competent to fulfill these varied, complex, and important responsibilities? Time is short. The requirements for the certification of teachers in some states are superficial. In those states, colleges may have only two or three years in which to prepare teachers. In some states, powerful forces seem to be conspiring to reduce certification requirements. Only four states and the District of Columbia require five years of college for prospective teachers for the secondary schools.

I wish to discuss very briefly only what I consider to be the minimum essentials of the training the prospective teacher of English for the secondary school should get to help him tackle the important responsibilities sketched in the preceding paragraphs.

However rich or impoverished a particular program may be, it should be designed according to the purposes of American schools and the role of the teacher. One guide is the statement of the purposes of education presented by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association: self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency, civic responsibility, and moral and spiritual values.<sup>5</sup> The second guide should be an operational

<sup>5</sup>*The Purposes of Education*, Educational Policies Commission, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1938.

*Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools*, Educational Policies Commission, 1951.



definition of the kind of teacher the college is trying to educate to work in the schools that have the purposes listed above. I recommend that educators of teachers consider the definition in the pamphlet entitled "*Measure of a Good Teacher*," prepared by Professor Lucien B. Kinney, of Stanford University, and others, and published by the California Teachers Association in San Francisco. This group has defined the competent teacher in terms of the following roles: (1) as a director of learning; (2) as a mediator of the culture; (3) a counselor and guidance worker; (4) a member of the school community; (5) a liaison between the school and the community; and (6) a member of the profession. These guides will serve well any committee responsible for preparing teachers of English.

The job of educating teachers of English involves not only the departments of English and education but also others in humanities and in the social sciences. Unfortunately, rifts still exist among some departments that should be most desirous to cooperate in preparing teachers. No department that has a part in educating future teachers should by default remove itself from the planning of that education. To reduce these fissures, an interdepartmental committee should plan a program that best suits the resources of the institution, its students, the requirements for certification, and the kinds of teaching positions taken by graduates.

This education planned by the interdepartmental committee should provide the candidate with a general education, a departmental and teaching major, a departmental and teaching minor, and professional education. The proportions, of course, will be dictated by

local and state conditions and requirements. The California State Department of Education, for example, requires the following distribution throughout a five-year college program: General Education, 27%; Teaching Major, 24%; Teaching Minor, 13%; Electives 21%; and Professional Education, 15%. In other words, a candidate for the General Secondary Teaching Credential devotes 85% of his five years of college to academic courses and 15% to those in the field of professional education.

Because a general education is so important for teachers, particularly for teachers of English, the program should not be only a listing of courses in humanities, social sciences, and in physical and life sciences. Nor should the courses required of all students be merely the beginning courses these departments require of their students who are starting a long sequence of courses to become specialists. Instead, the program and the courses should be designed in accordance with a definition of general education adopted by the college, such as that defined by the Harvard Committee in its report, *General Education in a Free Society*, or by a Stanford committee in *Continuity in Liberal Education in High School and College*.<sup>\*</sup>

From his courses in general education the prospective teacher, as the future mediator of our culture and director of learning, should gain considerable knowledge and understanding of our cultural heritage, its values, behavioral controls, its disciplines, and the nature of our democratic society, its

<sup>\*</sup>*Continuity in Liberal Education in High School and College*. Report of the Fourth Annual Conference held by the Stanford School of Humanities. Edited by Alfred H. Grommon. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1947.



classes, and conflicting values. To help him face the issues mentioned in the opening of this paper, he should learn "to think effectively," "to communicate clearly," "to make relevant judgments," "to discriminate among values" and to commit himself to adhere to the values basic to our culture.<sup>7</sup> These attitudes, concepts, knowledges, and skills, fundamental to a significant general education will not automatically be acquired by the passive student who is exposed to several departments' lectures in elementary courses. They must be planned for and taught directly.

The extent of the teaching major will also vary with local and state requirements. In California, for example, they vary from 36 semester (54 quarter units) to 60 semester units (90 quarter units). Rather than specify here the details of the courses that might constitute a teaching major, I shall again indicate only some minimum essentials.

All of us realize that no department of English can give the future teacher all of the English courses the department considers ideal. Compromises must be made. Nor should the instructors in English be expected to teach their courses as though all of their students are preparing to teach.

The teacher of English is primarily a teacher of language. Yet all of the teaching majors in departments of English examined stress literature almost to the exclusion of language. The public and the colleges themselves do not judge the competence of the high school graduates and the effectiveness of the student's high school teachers of English by the students' knowledge of literature or even by their ability to read; instead they judge them by their ability to write and speak and by their knowl-

edge of the English language. Yet, many college English departments apparently are blind to the contradiction between their neglect of writing, speaking, and language in the training they require of their prospective teachers and their wide-spread, sometimes tactless, criticism of their freshmen's ability to write and speak standard English.

The future teacher should have a course in the nature of present-day language he will be hired to teach. Such a course should acquaint him with what the linguists and semanticists are telling us about our language, the relationship between thought and language, the recent research on the teaching of grammar and other aspects of language, and the proper use of dictionaries.

He should also have an advanced course in composition which will help him review syntax, grammar, and rhetoric. But more important, he should recognize the importance of using composition as a means of practicing and teaching the methods of critical thinking and of using the problem-solving techniques. He should have a similar training in speaking, including the several types of speech activities he will later be expected to use in his classes.

One of the most important responsibilities of all teachers in a democracy is that of teaching citizens to think critically. Society and the colleges apparently assume that teachers can think critically and are actually teaching students to do likewise. The facts, however, do not support this assumption. Yet many colleges neglect to teach prospective teachers the rudiments of critical thinking and of teaching this basic skill. Research proves that the attitudes and skills of critical thinking, all of which are essential to the teacher's ful-

<sup>7</sup> *General Education in a Free Society*, p. 65.

fillment of his role as a director of learning and mediator of the culture, can be taught, but also that they must be taught directly.

Also fundamental to the teacher's roles as a director of learning and mediator of the culture is his schooling in world, English, and American literature. Because these fields are so extensive, departments of English are sometimes tempted to crowd as much as possible into courses required of majors. But no series of courses in literature, no matter how exhaustive, can possibly cover the field satisfactorily. Nor can even the most extensive courses prepare the future teacher to use all of the materials he is likely to have to teach in his own classes. Hence, departments interested in educating teachers are prudently eclectic in planning courses. Granted, the prospective teacher should know all that he can about literature. But when choices have to be made, the department and instructors should make sure that the following are emphasized: significant writers, selections, periods, and influences, important useful methods of analyzing literary selections, the moral and spiritual values explicit and implicit in the selections, appreciation of artistic values, and the importance of the student's reading unassigned materials beyond the limits of the courses.

Whatever else courses in fiction should do, for example, they should teach a student, whether or not he is intending to be a teacher, how to analyze any piece of literary fiction. How does studying, say, *Tom Jones*, help the student to learn how to analyze any piece of fiction to discern what the writer is trying to say, what moral and spiritual values are inherent in what the author is trying to convey to his

reader, how these values are related to those esteemed by our culture, what his literary methods are, how the selection is related to the writer's life and other works and to others' writings of this kind, how to evaluate the selection, and how to find out what representative critics think about the selection? If the student acquires sufficient background and learns these procedures, then he knows how to study materials beyond the courses and those he will later study for use in his own classes. Furthermore, he can teach his own students the appropriate aspects of these same methods for reading literature.

Similarly, courses in dramatic literature should help the future teacher study the most significant playwrights and plays, including some of the moderns. In addition, however, the instructors should continually emphasize and illustrate in their teaching that plays are written to be enacted upon a stage. The elements of dramatic structure should be stressed. In his eminently successful television programs on Shakespeare's plays, Professor Frank Baxter of the University of Southern California superbly illustrates how a teacher can treat dramatic literature as scripts for the stage.

These same principles hold for courses in poetry and nonfiction. I do not have time to say more about these courses.

As is clear, the job of teaching English in our secondary schools is complex. In addition to fulfilling his responsibilities in the areas mentioned above, the teacher is expected to know contemporary literature, particularly selections which especially appeal to teenagers. If there is no room for such a course, perhaps the candidate can be provided with a reading list of appro-

priate selections which he can read independently.

Outside the jurisdiction of the conventional department of English are other knowledges and skills basic to the teaching of English. Almost all of a candidate's college studying is based upon the assumption that he can read intelligently and, therefore, that he will succeed in transmitting our cultural heritage to his students through their comprehension of the printed symbol. Many departments, however, neglect training the candidate to teach the subtle, complex, indispensable skill of reading. Yet these same departments and society expect this teacher to use reading materials not only to develop the future Phi Beta and the other solid citizens but also to salvage the present or potential hoodlums.

Somehow, too, this teacher should learn something about journalism, radio, television, production of plays, and how to put out the school newspaper and yearbook.

Always, this interdepartmental committee responsible for the education of the teacher of English must remember that he singly represents to his community what the college departments of English, speech and drama, and journalism, represent to the college community.

Through his courses in general education and in his teaching major and allied fields, the prospective teacher is prepared as a mediator of the culture and a director of learning. He has yet to get specific help, however, on how he is to transmit the culture, to direct learning, to serve as a counselor, as a member of the school, the community, and the profession.

To help him understand the nature of the American secondary school, the

institution in which he will work, he should have a course that will acquaint him with the history of the secondary school, its contributions to the fulfillment of the five purposes of education, the curricula, the relationship of the program in the language arts to the curricula for the school, the administrative organization and financing of the school, programs of guidance, supervision, and public relations, co-curricular activities, the school in the community, its relations with the PTA and other groups in the community, professional organizations and ethics, school planning, and the present criticisms of the schools.

To gain further understanding of the society in which he lives, he should have a course in educational sociology that will acquaint him with the function of the teacher as a mediator of the culture and as a member of the school community and with the nature of the adolescents in his school. The course should include such topics as American values and patterns, education in a mass society, international understanding, race and ethnic relations and the school, communication and the educative process, community social structure and the school, and a case study of a "normal" child in an "average" school. He should be helped to identify his own values and to recognize the implications of these values for a worker in the American schools and then to relate these factors to materials and concepts presented in the analysis of each of the topics listed above.

He should also have a course in educational psychology that will contribute to his roles as a director of learning and as a counselor. Such a course should present psychological theories and established principles related to

educational guidance, mental health, assessments, and learning.

Just before the candidate does his student teaching, he should have a course in observation and participation in the schools. This course should enable him to have guided observations in the elementary schools and in the junior and senior high schools. He should be helped to relate all of his previous preparation to what is going on in the schools he visits in order to develop attitudes, procedures, and materials that will help him in his teaching.

Concurrent with his course in observations, the candidate should have a practical course in the methods of teaching English in the secondary schools. This course must be taught by someone who has had sufficient experience teaching in the secondary schools to be qualified to discuss the job and to help others. This course should acquaint the candidate with the prominent philosophies on the contribution of a program in the language arts, with the methods of developing courses of study, units, and lesson plans, and with the most appropriate research on the teaching of the several aspects of English; should review the skills in writing, reading, and speaking; and provide opportunities to teach in the class and to relate the materials and suggestions gained in this course with the teaching observed in the schools.

The entire program should be capped with the appropriately guided experience in student teaching. At this final stage of his preparation he should be able to serve adequately in his roles as a director of learning, mediator of the

culture, counselor, member of the school staff, liaison with the community, and member of the profession. He should be able at this stage to use "our wealth of research, experience, and creative imagination in teaching the language arts."

No matter how comprehensive the program may be for the preparation of the teacher of English, he is still going to complete it as a neophyte. "The colleges and universities cannot and do not pretend to give the new teacher all he needs. Beginning teachers are novices. Maturation of their capabilities must come through experience and in-service education on the job."<sup>8</sup> By the nature of his job, he will be the teacher of all the children of all the people.

Let us hope that as a result of his own being and his preparation, he will understand our youth—the troubled and the untroubled, the troublesome and those who are of no trouble whatsoever. Let us hope that through his understanding of the moral and spiritual values basic to our culture, and through his ability to reconcile the conflicts in values represented in the young men and women in his classes, he and all of his followers will contribute mightily to reversing the sickening trend in adolescents' behavior and in anti-intellectualism. If the teacher of English is not prepared to educate our youth in the culture we treasure and to engender respect for learning, who in the schools will be?

<sup>8</sup> Alfred H. Grommon, "The Training of Teachers of English for the Secondary Schools of California." *The Educational Forum*, November, 1947, p. 102.



# The English of VIPs

THOMAS PYLES

IF THEY accomplished little else, the Army-McCarthy hearings provided us with sustained specimens of the language of a group of men who must be conceded to be Very Important Persons—in Attorney Joseph N. Welch's phrase, "pretty big stuff." It follows that a record of the speech of such colossi, most of it the most formal variety of which they were capable, is in effect a record of current American English on what is perhaps its most sublime level.

Unfortunately an official transcript of the hearings, which would run into many volumes, is beyond the financial reach of most scholars. It is therefore devoutly to be wished that such a transcript will be preserved in every university library, so that linguistic scientists of, say, the early years of the twenty-second century may make use of these monumental texts as primary sources in their reconstruction of the morphological and syntactical features of the English language as it was spoken A.D. 1954 in the United States of America by men of awe-inspiring distinction and prestige. But only the more than eighty miles of tape recording would enable the Ph.D. of the post-atomic age—if there is to be any such—to study the various types of pronunciation, regional and social, represented in the speech of the august participants in the drama. Modern spelling being so highly conventionalized, the reportorial transcript would be of no aid in a study of the phonology of the American English of our own day. A reporter, for instance, hearing Senator McCarthy's

pronunciation of *grievous* to rhyme with *previous*, would merely transcribe the word in what is thought of as its "correct" spelling—that is, as I have recorded it, rather than as *grievious*.

Failing at first to realize fully the immense linguistic significance of what I was hearing over the radio, I did not begin to take notes until June 3, when the urge to do so became irresistible. The time required for making phonetic transcriptions and for writing phrases and occasionally whole sentences in longhand prevented my getting down in every instance the complete context in which a cited pronunciation or grammatical construction occurred, but the locutions themselves are, I believe, accurately recorded. In addition to the usages of the senators and the Secretary of the Army, I have included a few specimens drawn from Counsel Ray Jenkins's majestic hillbilly speech, for Mr. Jenkins, though he has not attained to the ineffable mysteries of senatorship, is certainly possessed of a dignity and an ability befitting so exalted a station in life. The same is doubtless true of Counsel Welch, who demonstrated, especially in the early days of

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the hearing, that he is a great stylist; but his Iowa-cum-Boston speech presents comparatively little of linguistic interest, perhaps because it conforms for the most part to what is popularly regarded as "correct" English. Mr. Roy Cohn and Mr. Francis Carr are, it is true, merely the satellites of greatness, but both are educated men who, from the point of view of, let us say, a university professor, have risen to positions of considerable eminence on the American scene. I have therefore not hesitated to draw a few examples from their speech.

Although only four of the participating senators (McCarthy, Mundt, Potter, and Jackson) actually hold college or university degrees, unless for reasons of modesty or political expediency Senators Symington ("student Yale, 1919-23") and Dirksen ("student U. of Minn., 1913-17") have omitted this academic distinction from their biographical sketches in the current *Who's Who in America*, all are, in the usually accepted sense, literate and highly articulate men, quite capable for the most part of quoting Shakespeare, the Bible, and Edgar A. Guest at the drop of a point of order. Of the two senators who lay claim only to a public school education, one, Senator McClellan, rose to a position of prominence as a lawyer after being admitted to the bar of his native Arkansas at the age of seventeen. Listening to his booming hill-type speech, no one could doubt that he is a man of dignity and superior ability. The other, Senator Dworshak, who had little to say in the course of the hearings but said that little well, has been, among other things, a newspaper editor.

When Senator McCarthy said "grievous" (at least three times, in ex-

pressing the moral indignation which comes so readily to him), he was using a fairly widespread variant pronunciation of *grievous*, but an unconventional one in the sense that it is not recorded in the dictionaries and, like some of the others to be cited, is included in lists of words "commonly mispronounced" prepared by persons who know how words "ought" to be pronounced and offered for sale to other persons who worry about their speech and are convinced that only its "incorrectness" has prevented them from climbing to the top of the tree. The same is true of Senator McClellan's loss of an entire syllable in *deteriorate*, which he consistently pronounced as "deteriate." On one occasion the word occurred in the Senator's cross examination of Mr. Roy Cohn in such a way that Mr. Cohn had to repeat it in his response. With a slight hesitation natural to a courteous man faced with such a linguistic situation, Mr. Cohn used his own five-syllabled pronunciation of the word. The Senator from Arkansas, not in the least fazed, went right back to his own natural pronunciation and proceeded to use it twice in the colloquy which followed. The quadri-syllabic pronunciation, which is probably more usual than lexicographers are willing to admit, was also that employed by Mr. Jenkins's junior, Mr. Pruitt.

The *i*-sound which Senator McCarthy inserted where it does not historically belong was omitted where it does historically belong by Senator McClellan in "prev'ous," "mim'ographed," "ap'prop'ate" (the adjective), "per'od," and "immed'ately," and in Senator Potter's *current* (a monosyllable, rhyming with *burnt*) "esp'onage." Other unconventional pronunciations—and it must be remembered that I use the word only

in the sense "not recorded in dictionaries"—were *Communist* as a homophone of *commonest* (McClellan, Potter); *dereliction* rhyming with *fair election* (Jackson); *particularly* with *warily* (Dirksen); *obstacle* with *Bob's pickle* (McClellan); *recognize* with *beckon eyes* (Potter); *substantiate* with *Bub, can't you wait* (McClellan); *jugular* with *smuggler* (McCarthy, with McClellan repeating the word and using the same pronunciation); *accurate* with *slacker it* (Mundt, McClellan); and some which, like the "fu'ther" of Mr. Jenkins and the "he'p" of Senator McClellan ("Ah'm gonna he'p the Chair if Ah can, occasionally"), are primarily regional. Mr. Jenkins's "inordinantly" for *inordinately* was probably a malapropism rather than a matter of pronunciation, like Senator Mundt's *maledictions* for *malefactions* and Senator Potter's "cool, calm, and collective."

Those not acclimated to the intrusive *r* common in certain parts of America (for instance, in Eastern New England and the New York City area) and not infrequent in Standard British English seem to find its occurrence cause for amusement. For their benefit I record Senator Symington's "idear," "Korear," "isher" (for *issue*), "shadder" (for *shadow*), and "supeener" (for *subpoena*, pronounced by other participants as "supeeny" and "supeenya"). This unetymological *r* was also noticeable, not surprisingly considering their linguistico-geographical backgrounds, from Messrs. Cohn and Carr.

The dictionaries record two pronunciations of *inquiry*, one with stress on the second syllable, pronounced *choir*, and the other with the first syllable stressed, as "*inkwuhry*." I did not observe that the first of these pronunciations, presumably the "preferred" one,

occurred once in the course of the hearings; the second occurred only occasionally. The pronunciation favored by VIPs, it seems, places primary stress on the first syllable and something approaching secondary stress on the second, which is pronounced as *queer*. To me this sounded very impressive, especially when uttered in the butterscotch baritone of Senator Dirksen.

Senator McCarthy's *highth* would appear to many to be an "error," though it is actually a perfectly sound historical variant of *height*, occurring in Milton's "highth of this great argument." Senator Potter's fairly consistent pronunciation of present participles with the ending *-in* ("dropping the *g*," as it is popularly described), although deplored by all teachers and all writers on "correct" speech, is likewise ancient and honorable.

Untraditional, hypercorrect pronunciations born of a self-conscious desire to "speak well" were of fairly frequent occurrence. These are of course attributable to a faith in mere literacy which no doubt appears to those nurtured in an older civilization than ours to be somewhat naive; but, inasmuch as literacy has in our American way of life (to lapse momentarily into Senatorese) frequently superseded the cultivated traditions of the past, it is worth recording a few examples. Lieutenant Blount's traditional pronunciation of his name (as "blunt") was, for instance, blithely ignored by all those who had occasion to use it, though they must have heard him say it as well as I did. Knowledge of the spelling was sufficient, however, to cause all to pronounce it to rhyme with *count*. Throughout the hearings, Chairman Mundt pronounced the second syllable of *Monmouth* as *mouth*, doubtless under the impression that he was

thereby speaking better than those who used the traditional "mónmuth." Linguistic overzealousness based upon the notion that using one's native language is an intellectual feat rather than a social accomplishment is probably responsible for such pronunciations as "o-casions" (McCarthy), "o-ficials" (Mundt), and "ee-ficiency" (McCarthy).

In the treatment of learned Latin (and Graeco-Latin) words, the entities to the dispute, as Chairman Mundt was fond of calling them, used pronunciations which remain unrecorded in dictionaries, though common enough in educated speech. *Semi* and *anti* were, for instance, pronounced with their final syllables as *eye* and *tie* (McCarthy, Cohn, Potter). Senator McCarthy's *modus operandi* showed traditional Anglicization until he got to the end of the phrase, which he pronounced to rhyme with *sandy*. (According to a tradition now practically extinct in American English, but still recorded in our dictionaries, *semi* and *anti* rhyme with *jemmy* and *panty*, *operandi* with *and die*.) The Greek name *Nike*, as applied to a new guided missile, was pronounced to rhyme with *Ike*; it is, however, perhaps going rather too far to expect that one with Senator McCarthy's tremendous responsibilities should be even on speaking terms with a pagan divinity.

But this is only to trip lightly over the surface of my phonological notes. It is necessary to pass rapidly on to other aspects of VIP speech—its morphology, its syntax, and finally some of its stylistic characteristics.

In the language of these decidedly effective citizens, verbs obviously do not agree in number with their subjects as consistently as prescriptive grammar-

ians would wish them to: "The filing of the false, fraudulent charges are a complete contradiction of the character of Bob Stevens" (McCarthy); "You know what clearance each of your staff have" (Symington); "[to determine] what the order of the phone calls were" (Mr. St. Clair, Mr. Welch's junior); "... as far as the infiltration of the armed services were concerned" (Cohn); "... as far as coddling Communists are concerned" (Cohn); "... if the charges was dismissed" (McClellan); "... as far as Mr. Adams and Mr. Cohn is concerned" (McCarthy); "You was advised of [something in regard to Senator McClellan's coming back on the Committee], wasn't you?" (McClellan).

That the *everyone* (someone, everybody, etc.) ... *they* (their, them) construction is normal and natural in modern English should be apparent to anyone with eyes and ears, despite the fact that prescriptive authorities—those who write handbooks telling us how we ought to speak our native tongue—will not allow that the locution is in good usage. It is likely that a statistical examination of writings in English since the seventeenth century would disclose the fact that *everyone* ... *they* is of far more frequent occurrence, even in the works of the acknowledged masters of English literature, than *everyone* ... *he* (his, him). With the assurance to my readers that the incidence of the construction in question was rather high during the hearings, I content myself with two examples: "Everybody has said three or four times exactly where they stand" (Mundt); "Nobody is going to say whether they're glad or sorry or anything else" (Welch).

Other transgressions of the senators, the Secretary, their aides, and their



counsel against the dicta of linguistic Emily Posts follow. Some of these were, it should be pointed out, already in perfectly reputable use long before the Army-McCarthy hearings, though still widely supposed to be "errors":

*Like* as a conjunction: "... like I am now" (Symington); "... a spirit of compromise like I suggested" (Carr).

Historical nominative form of the personal pronoun in objective construction: "Now, Stu, let's you and I go to the woodshed" (McCarthy); "... these calls between Secretary Stevens and I" (Dirksen).

Relative or interrogative *who* for *whom*: "I checked back with the people who I interviewed" (Cohn); (in monitored call to Stevens) "Who have you talked to?" (Dirksen); "... and finally Senator McCarthy said, 'Who *did* you call?'" (Cohn).

*Set for sit*: "Actually, members of this Committee set in a semijudicial capacity" (Potter); "You've let them set there and testify day after day" (McClellan).

*Different than* for *different from*: "You give a different connotation than I would, and than I did" (Carr); "... an altogether different meaning than it has for us" (Mundt).

*Try and* for *try to*: "We try and sort out all the mail from Wisconsin" (McCarthy).

*Myself* for *me*: "He was in contact with myself and Don" (Carr).

*Kind (type) of a* for *kind (type) of*: "... this kind of a threat" (McCarthy); "... that type of a threat" (McCarthy).

*And which* for *which*: "... one other statement, and which is perhaps not a question" (Jenkins).

*But what for but that*: "... no question but what ..." (McCarthy).

*Mad* "angry": (In monitored call to Dirksen) "Of course he didn't like it—got very mad about it" (Stevens).

*Can* for *may*: "Can I proceed without interruption?" (Symington).

Number of Latin neuter noun: Senator Potter, Senator McClellan, and Mr. Carr all very sensibly used the Anglicized plural *memorandums*. The following examples, all taken from the speech of Mr. Welch on June 15, are representative of the confusion

which prevailed in regard to *memorandum*, -a: "these memorandum"; "the first memoranda [the context indicated that this was intended to be singular] which you dictated"; "about half of that memoranda"; "Schine is mentioned in the single paragraph of that memoranda." On one occasion Senator Potter used *memorandum* as a plural: "These are not all the memorandum you have prepared?"

*Reason is because* for *reason is that*: I failed to note a single occurrence of the "recommended" construction; even Senator Mundt, a teacher of speech before his translation to the dizzying heights which he now inhabits, used "the reason is because."

The style of a VIP can be close-packed and down-to-earth, as in Senator Mundt's "Send them a transcript of what transpired here today and ask them to transmit their reaction," or it can soar into the upper reaches of rhetoric, as in Senator McCarthy's metaphor about the Communists "holding a razor blade over the juggler [or was it *juggaler*?] vein of the nation," all the more effective for its delivery in his sweetly reasonable, long-suffering monotone. It may be inferred (a word frequently used during the hearings, incidentally, and usually in an older sense "imply," with Senator Symington playing safe by saying, "You have constantly inferred or implied ...") that on the more rarefied levels of American life events *transpire* rather than merely happen and that persons *cooperate together* rather than merely cooperate, *continue on* but sometimes have to *refer back*, and give a *rundown* of a situation instead of merely summarizing it. It is also apparent that in VIPese two words meaning the same thing are considered twice as effective as one of them used alone, just as a word of four syllables is considered twice as effective as a disyllabic synonym. Redundancy would seem in fact almost to be a



desideratum: witness Senator Dirksen's "Did you [two] travel in the same seat together?" and Senator Mundt's "... an effort to endeavor to solve [a problem]," "... so that we won't have to be held here interminably and forever," and "Did you have a trepidation that something serious and dire was going to happen to the Army?"

With the senatorial imprimatur, we may conclude that *spearhead* and *pin-point* are now verbs in the very best standing, despite the unreasoning prejudices of stylistically conservative persons, who may also find something distasteful (if only because of their novelty) about, *hassle*, and/or, *target date*, and the clipped *recap* for *recapitulation*. Audible punctuation would seem to be gaining ground in the uppermost levels of the national life, as in Senator McCarthy's use of the word *period* to announce that, happily no doubt for many of his unregenerate listeners, he had arrived at the end of a sentence. This stylistic grace note also made itself evident in the speech of Mr. Cohn and Senator Dirksen. VIP metaphors were occasionally a bit confused, as in Sena-

tor Potter's "how to cure that problem" and Mr. Carr's "means of dangling a little pressure over us," but none of the other participants had the golden opportunities vouchsafed Senator Mundt, who seldom had to refer to himself in the first person. He was "The Chair"; hence we were told that "The Chair went to South Dakota to make some speeches" and "The Chair is not wearing his television shirt this morning." Even Senator Dirksen was unable to rise to such heights.

From the examples which I have cited, it is obvious that a good many grammatical and stylistic constructions proscribed implicitly or by implication in books on English usage and in dictionaries do in fact occur in the speech of our most high-powered citizens. If standard American English usage is indeed based upon the practice of men of such exalted position as the participants in the Army-McCarthy hearings must be admitted to be, then it seems high time that some of the "rules" be revised. It is, however, a fairly safe prediction that nothing of the sort will actually be done.

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*If some books are deemed most baneful and their sale forbid,  
how, then, with deadlier facts, not dreams of doting men. Those  
whom books will hurt will not be proof against events. Events,  
not books, should be forbid.*

*Herman Melville in The Encantadas.*

# We Look to the High Schools

JOHN H. FISHER

THE declining literacy of our college freshmen and the dwindling numbers of our English majors ought to make us aware of the stake that we have in high school English. Our ivory towers of scholarship and criticism will not long survive once the foundations begin to crumble.<sup>1</sup> How long, then, will we lament the lack of preparation and interest of the students we get in college without recognizing that unless we strengthen the hands of our colleagues in high school, the field may be lost before we can ever bring *our* brilliance and erudition to bear on it.

One part of our problem is certainly the preparation of the high school English teacher. He is the first to meet the maturing mind and has the first opportunity to open windows on the world of thought and beauty. But what sort of person is he—what sort of person is he *expected* to be? The high school certification requirements that provide the most obvious answers to these questions command about as much attention from the average college teacher as SEC regulations. When we do think of them, it

is generally to rail at them as pettifogging restrictions that would keep a Kittredge from teaching English in a country high school. Actually, since would-be Kittredges seldom choose to teach in public schools and English is frequently the side-line of the home economics teacher or the coach, the *minimum requirement* for certification in English must provide us with our initial picture of the high school English teacher, a picture we can amplify and correct as we devise means for accumulating more information.

It would appear that data on these requirements could be readily compiled from the two authoritative handbooks, W. W. Armstrong and T. M. Stinnett, *A Manual on Certification Requirements for School Personnel in the United States* (National Education Association, 1953, revised biennially), and R. G. Woellner and M. Aurilla Wood, *Requirements for Certification* (University of Chicago Press, 19th edition, 1954-55, revised annually). But it turned out not to be that simple. As we pored over the manuals trying to make a simple table<sup>2</sup> of the English and

<sup>1</sup> What happens to college departments when high school offerings fall off is all too clearly illustrated by Latin, which in 1910 enrolled 54.5% of high school students and in 1949, 7.8%, and by the modern foreign languages, which in 1915 enrolled 40.6% of high school students and in 1949, 13.7%. For these figures and further discussion of the decline of foreign languages see William R. Parker, *The National Interest and Foreign Languages*, U. S. National Commission for UNESCO, April, 1954, pp. 76 f. While the problems of the foreign languages are not completely parallel to ours in English, their history ought to make us uncomfortable.

<sup>2</sup> The table of foreign language certification requirements may be found in *PMLA*, LXVIII, iv, pt. 2 (Sept. 1954), xi-xii.

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foreign language minimum requirements, we discovered that they listed Arizona as requiring every teacher to have a 24-hour major and a 15-hour minor, but did not specify whether he had to teach either; Colorado was in one table listed as granting a blanket certificate on the basis of a 15-hour minor, elsewhere as requiring a 12-hour minor; Mississippi was in one chart listed as granting a blanket certificate, elsewhere as endorsing subjects to be taught; so also for Montana; Washington, D.C., with a fifth-year and 30-hour requirement in all the charts, appeared willing to certify on the basis of an unspecified minor; and so on through the list. So many contradictions and ambiguities emerged that we ended by asking the chief certifying officer of each of the states to verify our interpretations. What should have been a three-day bookkeeping chore turned into a two-month research project, not completed until we telephoned the last four state officials for their replies.

Eventually, the data in the table below were assembled. Even though they are all directly from the certifying officers, we are not confident about them. Our correspondence left us with the impression that state officials themselves have difficulty interpreting their frequently vague and general directives,<sup>3</sup> and that some of them who appear to

be sincerely anxious to improve standards find themselves hamstrung by existing legislation. Nevertheless, these are the most nearly complete and accurate data on the requirements for English certification so far assembled,<sup>4</sup> and, at least on paper, they make a depressing picture.

Is it possible that in 14 states, including states as important as California, Illinois, and Texas, an applicant with a bachelor's degree, a major and a minor in "subjects taught in high schools," and, of course, the proper courses in education, is certified by the state to teach *any* academic subject? We don't know enough yet to be either for or against tight state control of teacher certification; we assume that conscientious principals try to see that their classes are competently staffed. But what can certification possibly mean in the 14 states that grant "blanket" certificates—except that students have taken 16 to 24 hours of professional education? It is these systems, in which all else is so general, but the education requirement so precise, that have provoked recent charges of "educationist bureaucracies."

Even when the subject the teacher is supposedly qualified in is endorsed on the certificate the picture is discouraging. In New Hampshire and Delaware he is allowed to teach English if he has had six hours in college, or the equivalent of a freshman course. Twelve states require 15 hours—two full-year courses

<sup>3</sup>Georgia's code, for instance, calls for a bachelor's degree with half the hours in general education, one fourth in the teaching field, and one fourth in professional education, but it neglects to specify the total number of hours. Interpretations come up with 26½ hours for certification in a foreign language. In Colorado, students must meet the subject matter requirements of the University of Colorado. Kentucky apparently grants special requests for teachers to teach subjects in which they are not properly certified, but in which they have 12 hours. The number of "special cases" must be legion.

<sup>4</sup>Both general and the specific requirements were summarized by M. Pullins Claytor, "State Certification Requirements for Teachers of English," *College English* (March 1953), pp. 332-340. Miss Claytor's table of general and professional education requirements omits two states and her table of English requirements omits 3 states. Many of her hour requirements differ from those here listed.

(i.e., freshman composition and sophomore literature) and one semester of advanced work. Six states ask for 18 hours. Nine ask for 24, or four full-year courses. Only three ask for 30 hours—but is English really taught more competently in Georgia and Florida than in Pennsylvania and California?

Perhaps we are distressed by the minimums for English because we don't see them in perspective. The NEA manual begins by pointing out that the "trend toward upgrading minimum requirements for the certification of school personnel among the 48 states . . . which followed the close of World War II . . . continues to be pronounced. Twenty-three states have increased minimum requirements for the lowest elementary teaching certificate since 1946. Eleven states have increased minimum requirements for regular certificates for high school teachers since 1946. . . . Seventeen states have increased minimum requirements in some fields, notably elementary school teaching, more than once."<sup>5</sup> But in 1953 only twenty-five states and the District of Columbia required a bachelor's degree for a regular elementary certificate. Only forty required the bachelor's for initial high school certification, and only four (Arizona, California, New York, and Washington) and the District of Columbia required a fifth year.

If four states still grant initial high school certificates to applicants without the bachelor's, we must be realistic in our appraisal of the subject matter requirement. The real danger is that in the "upgrading" now generally under way, the subject matter fields, including English, will be squeezed out. For in-

TABLE

State	English Minimum	English Major	Allowed in Speech etc.	Hours of Education
Florida	30	unspec	12 <sup>a</sup>	20
Georgia	30	unspec	15	18
North Carolina	30	unspec	unspec	18
Arkansas	24	unspec	6	18
Indiana	24	49 area <sup>b</sup>	6	18
Maryland	24	unspec	6	16
Mississippi	24	unspec	6	18
Missouri	24	unspec	5	18
Oklahoma	24	32 area <sup>b</sup>	8	21
South Carolina	24	unspec	unspec	18
Tennessee	24	30 <sup>c</sup>	12	24*
West Virginia	24	unspec	unspec	20
Alabama	18	24	6	24†
Kentucky	18	30	unspec	18*
New Jersey	18	30	6	18*
New York	18	unspec	none	18*
Pennsylvania	18	unspec	unspec	18*
Virginia	18	unspec	none	18*
Arizona	15	24	unspec	24†
Connecticut	15	unspec	unspec	18†
Idaho	15	unspec	unspec	20†
Michigan	15	24	unspec	20†
Minnesota	15	24	unspec	18†
Ohio	15	unspec	unspec	17†
Rhode Island	15	unspec	unspec	24†
South Dakota	15	24	9	15*
Wisconsin	15	24	6	18†
North Dakota	15	unspec	none	16†
Wyoming	15	unspec	unspec	20†
New Mexico	15	24	unspec	16†
Louisiana	12	unspec	none	18†
Massachusetts	9	18	unspec	12†
Delaware	6 <sup>d</sup>	18	unspec	18†
New Hampshire	6 <sup>e</sup>	18	unspec	21†
D. C.	"minor"	30	unspec	24†
California	blanket (20)	(36)	unspec	22†
Colorado	blanket (15)	unspec	unspec	20†
Illinois	blanket (16)	(32)	unspec	16†
Iowa	blanket (15)	(20)	unspec	20†
Kansas	blanket (24)	(24)	unspec	18†
Maine	blanket (12)	(40 area <sup>b</sup> )	unspec	24†
Montana	blanket (20)	(30)	unspec	16†
Nebraska	blanket (15)	unspec	(6)	18†
Nevada	blanket	unspec	unspec	18†
Oregon	blanket (24)	unspec	unspec	22†
Utah	blanket (12)	(20)	none	22†
Texas	blanket	unspec	unspec	24†
Vermont	blanket (18)	unspec	unspec	18†
Washington	blanket (10)	(20)	unspec	16†

\* Hours of professional education the same as the minimum requirement for endorsement to teach English.

† Hours of professional education more than the minimum required for endorsement to teach English.

<sup>a</sup> The Florida 12-hour allowance in speech, journalism, library science, and other fields allied to English is optional.

<sup>b</sup> Indiana also has a Special Certificate which requires 60 hours in the area or specialization (e.g., English, Speech, and Drama). "Area" has this meaning throughout the table.

<sup>c</sup> In Tennessee, certification in English is upon the basis of 30 semester hours of which 6 may be in allied subjects; applicants offering 24 hours of English and 12 of Speech may be certified in both.

<sup>d</sup> With 6 hours, a teacher may teach one class only; he cannot be certified with less than 18 hours.

<sup>e</sup> The 6-hour minor in New Hampshire is obviously not encouraged.

Blanket certificates are those which do not carry endorsement to teach any particular subject, but attest simply that the candidate has fulfilled the general requirements. The hours in parentheses are those recommended for a major or minor. Presumably a teacher would teach a subject in which he had majored or minored, but this is a matter of local option.

stance, in recommendations made in 1953 for the revision of the Michigan state certification code, hours of profes-

<sup>5</sup> Armstrong and Stinnett, p. 1.



sional education were raised from 20 to 30 and the general education minimum was placed at 40 hours while the need for a subject matter major was minimized on the ground that "we are at the point where secondary education is assuming a trend toward the integrated program, making instructional processes and the nature of secondary education more similar to elementary education," so that "it was generally felt that we are also at the point where, with certain precautions, we can now educate the general practitioner in the teaching profession, leaving specialization to the graduate schools."<sup>6</sup> If in the upgrading going on during the next few years the general and professional education requirements are raised without a corresponding increase in the subject matter requirements, the improvement is not going to make our freshmen any more literate or encourage any more of them to major in English.

Of course, we may simply be borrowing trouble; we are thinking in terms of minimums, and no good educational system was ever run on minimums. If the vast majority of high school teachers are much better prepared than these data suggest, we can

\*From a mimeographed draft of the subcommittee proposals. These proposals are now being subjected to re-study.

stop worrying about this particular aspect of the problem, although we could then logically argue that the minimums should be raised to a meaningful level. The only factual data on the preparation of teachers within a state that we know are in Harold J. Bowers, *Teacher Certification in 1953* (Ohio State Department of Education, 1953, p. 18), where we find that in 1953, of 1,297 high school English teachers in Ohio, 767 (60%) had from 15 to 24 hours preparation and 528 (40%) more than 25. Are these percentages good or bad? How do they compare with those for your state? A series of state-wide studies by individuals willing to dig out the facts about the preparation of high school English teachers in their states would provide the basis for a serious consideration of what constitutes proper and sufficient training for the high school English teacher. This done, we would be in a position to talk with some authority to state certifying bodies. But until we have the facts—not personal impressions or samplings but *all the facts*—we cannot hope to influence those who *have* accepted the responsibility for the public schools, who live with their problems every day, and who justifiably feel that they know better than we what training is needed for the high school teacher.

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*Here's the pay scale for New York University as it will become effective in June, 1955: professors, \$9,000 to \$16,000; associate professors, \$6,500 to \$9,500; assistant professors, \$5,000 to \$7,000; instructors, \$3,600 to \$5,000. By contrast, according to a recent NEA study, the medians of instructors' salaries in the small liberal arts colleges range from a low of \$2,743 to a high of \$3,330.*

# Round Table

## Does Vocabulary-Building Have Value?

For years I have had an interest in the building of students' vocabularies in college. Last June I received a letter from Dr. Wilfred Funk, who has long been widely known for his various publications in aid of vocabulary-building. He expressed a proposal as follows:

There are those of us who say that building the vocabularies of boys and girls helps to raise their marks in all their studies. There is the other camp that claims that this is putting the cart before the horse. This group asserts that intelligent boys and girls have good vocabularies by virtue of their intelligence and that lower grade mentalities cannot be improved by "vocabulary stuffing."

This futile argument has been going on for years, and yet it seems to me that these conflicting claims are subject to proof.

Why wouldn't it be possible to try an experiment in a grammar school, a high school, and a college? In each case select two classes in English. Keep one class as the control group. This control section would take the normal English courses. The experimental group would take identical courses, but in addition would receive definite vocabulary building instruction, say for a period of fifteen minutes twice a week. It is true that the assigned time for vocabulary study would be brief, but it is my belief that this half hour a week would engage the interest of the pupils and that they would tend to hold that interest and apply it outside of the schoolroom. That is, they would become curious about words.

If this program were continued for a period of three years, my guess is that the marks of the experimental classes would, on the average, be higher in *all* subjects than the average marks of the control classes.

If the results should turn out this way and our claim was so proved, it seems to me that a real contribution would be made to education.

If my idea seems sound, and if such a series of experiments should entail any expenses, I would be glad to cover them within reason.

It might be that some graduate studying for a Ph.D. could be put in charge.

I present Dr. Funk's letter here, with his permission, so that his suggestion may reach a wide audience.<sup>1</sup> Although I myself cannot institute any new investigations in the area of the value of vocabulary-building, I should be glad for others to do so. And, who, especially, should make such investigations now? Chiefly, any persons who are opposed to giving students definite instruction intended to increase their vocabularies.

I make such an answer because it seems to me that properly the burden of proof may be said to lie now upon "anti-vocabulary" persons. I say this because (1) my experience with students has continuously confirmed for me the impression gained years ago, from certain extensive investigations I made at the University of Illinois, that vocabulary-building has considerable value; and (2) noteworthy evidence has been presented by others that supports persons who favor vocabulary-building.

My own first investigation dealt with 2,430 freshmen in six different colleges and schools of the University of Illinois, in the first semester of the year 1938-39. About this investigation I reported in part:

Its chief value lies in this indication: If a high-school student is to achieve scholastic success when he goes to college, he should have a larger and better vocabulary than the vocabularies of most of the students who will be his classmates in college.

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Funk's address is: The Kingsway Press, Inc., 270 Park Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

... The present investigation may be said to point also toward a conclusion that if at any time during his educational career (even after he has entered college, or graduate school) a person possesses or builds up a vocabulary greater than the vocabularies of his classmates, his grades in the immediate future will be higher than theirs.

Then in the first semester of 1939-40 I made another investigation, this time with 2,147 freshmen in six different colleges and schools of the University of Illinois. As to the implications given by the results of this investigation I wrote in part:

If a student has a superior vocabulary, it will probably follow that he will do better work academically [than other students of his year in his school or college]; even if a superior vocabulary may not cause superior intellectual ability, such a vocabulary usually indicates, and surely may contribute toward, such ability.

In a third study I approached the matter of English vocabulary in a different way, and again found that the evidence supported my continuing to favor instruction that would make for increased student vocabularies.<sup>2</sup>

As for evidence presented by others, I remark first that Harold W. Bernard in investigations at the University of Oregon obtained evidence that the measurement of vocabulary is not merely the measurement of one aspect of general intelligence; and he concludes, in part, that "it would seem that teachers might do well to consider the advisability of giving more specific attention to vocabulary instead of trusting that development will be achieved through concomitant learnings."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> My three articles cited are: (1) "Vocabulary and Success in College," *School and Society*, LI (Feb. 17, 1940), 221-24; (2) "Vocabulary and Success in College," *Journal of Higher Education*, XIII (April, 1942), 213-15; (3) "A College English Teacher Looks at the Study of Latin," *College English*, IV (May, 1943), 491-99.

<sup>3</sup> "Some Relations of Vocabulary to Scholarship," *School and Society*, LI (April 13, 1940), 494-96.

Then I quote from C. Rexford Davis's introduction to his book *Vocabulary Building*:

... the possession of a large vocabulary does not in itself guarantee success. But without a large vocabulary outstanding success seldom occurs.

*The lack of a good working vocabulary is the most important single factor contributing to a failure in college.* This statement is based upon a study of student mortality at Rutgers University, Colleges for Men, over the past three years. It can be said with certainty that of those students who have not obtained a good working vocabulary, either before entrance into college or during their early college work, only one out of four will still be in college at the end of his second year, while only one out of ten will still be in college at the end of his third year.

... A good vocabulary will contribute greatly to his [every student's] success both in college and afterwards. A weak vocabulary foreshadows failure.<sup>4</sup>

The few items referred to above are not the only available ones pertinent to the discussion of the worth of vocabulary-building. A bibliography of vocabulary studies was published not long ago by the

<sup>4</sup> (New York, 1951), p. 1—quoted with the permission of Professor Davis. In a letter to me, Jan. 8, 1955, Professor Davis adds: "Whenever I have run into evidence of ineffectiveness in vocabulary training—and I have done so often—the trouble has been that the instructor or the text or both have laid stress on synonyms rather than meaning. Investigation has shown further that stress has been laid on the students' own use of the new words in sentences of their composing. There have been two unsatisfactory results—sometimes concomitant, sometimes not: (1) The students know that two words are synonyms of each other, but do not know what the meaning of either is. (2) The students are using new words before they have really mastered them, so that frequently they are using, and understanding, words incorrectly—this result is worse than no vocabulary training at all. Whenever I have the opportunity, therefore, I urge upon all who are interested in vocabulary work two policies: (1) to emphasize meaning (definition in detail) rather than synonyms; (2) to aim to improve *passive* rather than *active* vocabularies. These two policies in instruction have made our work here remarkably successful."

Bureau of Educational Research at the Ohio State University. That publication devotes three pages to the mere listing of studies treating "Vocabulary and Spelling as a Factor in Success or Failure."<sup>3</sup> And I hope that several persons, the more the better, will carry out a vari-

ety of further investigations into the worth of vocabulary-building. It seems clear at present, however, that the definite evidence already procured is largely in support of vocabulary-building as beneficial to students; and vocabulary-building, therefore, should be frankly encouraged.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 68-70 of *Bibliography of Vocabulary Studies*, comp. under the direction of Edgar Dale (Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, The Ohio State University, 1949).

William Darby Templeman  
University of Southern California

### Student Vocabulary Score—Student Magazine Reading

What relation does word comprehension have to the actual level of a student's reading? This paper is based on a survey conducted among 847 college freshmen during the past three years with the object of correlating their vocabulary scores<sup>1</sup> with the magazines they read. Several conclusions strongly present themselves:

- The college freshman is not reading magazines up to the potential reading ability his vocabulary score indicates.
- The college freshman reads those magazines available to him at home and makes little effort to secure other magazines (with one exception).
- Availability of magazines determines what is read rather than student age, vocabulary, economic background, occupational goal, or personal interests (with one exception).
- The study emphasizes the fact that the college student is ready to extend the range and raise the level of his reading if properly motivated.

847 college freshmen, whose ages ran from 16 to 28, were questioned about their magazine reading interests and preferences. The magazines reported as read regularly by all age levels were *Life* (64%—nearly 2 out of every 3 students), the *Reader's Digest* (42%—2 out of every 5 students), the *Saturday Evening Post* (39½%—over 1 out of every 3 students), *Time* (27%—over 1 out of every 4 students), and *Look* (23½%—over 1 out of

every 5 students). 13½% (over 1 out of every 8 students) read no magazine regularly.

Of 347 college freshmen who were also asked to list the magazines which they did not read regularly but would like to read, the leading magazines were again *Life* (13½%), the *Reader's Digest* (7%), *Time* (6%), the *Saturday Evening Post* (5%), and *Look* (4%). 42% (2 out of every 5 students) could think of no magazine they wished to add to their regular reading.

Approximately 12% of the students questioned were girls, and a special survey was made of their replies. The results show that in only one instance did their reading vary from that of the men. They listed the following magazines as read regularly: *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post* tied for first place (36% each); then followed the *Reader's Digest* (27%), the *Ladies' Home Journal* (20%), and *Time* (16%). 16% of the girls read no magazine regularly.

When the 847 students were examined in the light of their vocabulary scores, which ranged from 52 to 148 (the highest possible score was 150), it was found that magazine reading does not change with a broader and fuller vocabulary, but that the same magazines maintain their popularity. In the range from 61-70 (63 is the English median for 10th grade), *Life* was most popular, followed by the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reader's Digest*,

<sup>1</sup> Inglis vocabulary tests A and B were used.



*Look*, and *Time*. In the range from 71-80 (78 is the median for 11th grade), *Life* was first, the *Reader's Digest* and *Look* tied for second place, the *Saturday Evening Post* third, and *Time* fourth. In the range from 81-95 (87 is the median for 12th grade), *Life* was again the favorite, mentioned twice as many times as the *Reader's Digest*, second; then came the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Look*, and *Time*. No other magazines approached these in popularity. On the college freshman range of 96-110 (the vocabulary median for freshmen is 105), *Life* was first, the *Reader's Digest* second, the *Saturday Evening Post* third, *Time* fourth, *Collier's* a weak fifth. (After the vocabulary score mark of 100, *Look* almost disappears.) In the range from 121 up (129 is the average score for college graduates), *Life* stands first, the *Saturday Evening Post* second, and the *Reader's Digest* and *Time* are tied for third.

In other words, the trend is the same no matter what the vocabulary level. Age makes no difference; sex makes little difference. Students show little discrimination in choice of reading.<sup>2</sup> Hardly ten students out of 847 mentioned reading any magazines related to their future goals or chosen professions. (These few were in the fields of television and political science.) Even sports magazines and outdoor magazines, though read, rank far below *Life*, the *Reader's Digest*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* in popularity. The one classification which did attract interest and which the student probably had to make some effort to obtain was that of motor magazines (*Hotrod*, *Motor Trend*, *Speed Age*, etc.). Interest in these maga-

zines, however, ceased entirely after the age of 19.

The home apparently influences student reading much more than the school. With very few exceptions (such as motor magazines) the magazines a student reads regularly are those found in his home. Often when magazines are *not* available in the home, the student does not read. Two typical examples are:

- a. A male student with a vocabulary score of 112 (above college freshman level), studying to become an electrical engineer, whose English grade rose during his first college semester from C to a high B: magazines read regularly—none; magazines he would like to read—the *Reader's Digest*; magazines available in his home—none.
- b. A male student with a vocabulary score of 79 (78 is the median for high school juniors), studying to become a mechanical engineer: magazines read regularly—none; magazines he would like to read—none particularly; magazines available in his home—the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

When students replied to the question, "Where are books and magazines available to you?" most replied home, many the public library, a few a friend's house—but not a single student mentioned a high school or college library.

Obviously college students are not reading up to their potential reading levels if the student with a vocabulary score of 52 chooses the same magazines as the student with a score of 125. Further lack of interest is shown by the fact that, as mentioned, 13½% (1 out of every 8 students) read no magazine regularly and that 42% (2 out of every 5 students) could mention no magazine which they desired to read regularly in addition to those they were reading. 4% (1 out of every 25 students) neither read a magazine regularly nor wished to do so. Since magazine reading is usually thought to appeal to students more than novels or nonfiction, these figures indicate a serious lack of reading in-

<sup>2</sup> One sophomore high school class of 19 girls and 9 boys was given the same questionnaire. Even at this early age their magazine reading preferences were *Life* (12 out of 28); the *Reader's Digest*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Seventeen* (each 10 out of 28); and comic books (9 out of 28). The college freshmen have, at any rate, acquired a standard which will not permit them to admit openly their preference for comic books.

terest. This is further emphasized when it is pointed out that of 847 college freshmen

only 39 read the *National Geographic*  
 only 37 read the *New Yorker*  
 only 25 read the *Atlantic Monthly*  
 only 15 read *Harper's*  
 only 15 read the *Saturday Review*  
 only 7 read *Fortune*  
 only 5 read the *Theatre Arts Monthly*

Some student replies, however, show that interest can be developed by class comment. Though only 37 now read the *New Yorker*, an additional 35 stated that they would like to read this magazine regularly after it had been mentioned several times in class. This is a small number, but it is larger than the number desiring to read *Collier's*, *Newsweek*, *True*, or *Esquire*. Introducing students to a greater variety of reading will produce an effect.

Another note of hope is the fact that 15½% of the boys and 18% of the girls, when asked what they wished to learn in freshman English, mentioned "improve my vocabulary," "increase my vocabulary," "a larger vocabulary," "vocabulary building," "a more effective vocabulary." Students desire to know more words, a desire stemming no doubt from their feeling of inadequacy when asked to express themselves in writing. They do not realize that growth in active vocabulary generally proceeds from growth in recognition vocabulary and that recognition vocabulary

expands by reading material which is just a little too difficult for them. This growth will not come from looking at the pictures in *Life* and skimming the captions, or through the junior high school vocabulary level of many popular magazines. The instructor's problem, then, is to apply to a wider and more difficult reading range the vocabulary ability that already exists and the desire to increase it.

A study of the survey suggests some possible applications for teachers:

- a. Ask students to examine a quality magazine for format, advertising, regular departments, types of articles, and report on their findings in a theme.
- b. Assign a theme requiring students to study the way a popular and a "quality" magazine or a professional journal handle the same subject.
- c. Assign a comparison theme in which the student examines a magazine with which he is not familiar and compares it to one he is reading.
- d. Mention frequently in the classroom current magazine articles, passing some of the magazines about; distribute the old copies of your magazines such as the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Saturday Review* to the brighter students.
- e. Refer occasionally to the magazine reading room of the college library.

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### On the Indiscriminate Use of Quotations

The disparity between an epigram *in situ* and the same epigram (or memorable saying) in a later setting often forcefully strikes the far-ranging reader with scornful thoughts concerning his author's taste or learning. Terence's famous "*humani nihil a me alienum puto*" is sometimes used with the meaning of a universal concern for one's fellow creatures, whereas in the original play (*Heaut.* 77) the line is offered in excuse for meddling.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Irving Babbitt, *Literature and the American College* (Boston, 1908), pp. 8-9.

An example may be found in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XLIV (1945), 324: "For Kierkegaard had diverse approaches which took him through many other human enterprises so that one can aptly say of him as was said of one of the ancients—nothing human was alien to him." It is exquisitely inept to liken this gloomy Dane to a busybody. Whether one uses this saying in the sense of Terence's context or with a lax meaning (for which, to be sure, there is some ancient authority) depends on the

probable knowledge of one's readers. Those who know may be offended; those who do not know will not suffer this kind of irritation.

Like the classics, the Bible is frequently quoted out of context. In a speech at a national political convention recently, an orator thus described the platform of his opposition: "It cursed us and all our works. For the most part, it promised all things to all men." This is a profane rendering of St. Paul's "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). The general ignorance of the Bible, however, perhaps led many to regard the orator's paraphrase as a barb of his own manufacture. An example of another kind is found in the text of a recent candidate's address accepting the presidential nomination of his party: "I have asked the Merciful Father of us all to let this cup pass from me. But from such dread responsibility one does not shrink in fear, in self-interest, or in false humility. So, 'if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.'" It is tasteless to many and blasphemous to others to employ language that likens a

man to Jesus Christ: the differences between a man accepting a United States presidential nomination and Christ accepting crucifixion are infinitely great. Even those who find nothing amiss in this comparison would probably consider it a bold stroke.

One courts derision by imitating a classic without improving it or lending it a new and happy air. At the end of a keynote speech of a recent national political convention we find these words: "We have clashed before. We shall fight them in the cities and fight them in the towns. We shall fight in the counties and fight in the precincts. We shall never surrender." This notable piece of bathos has been described as a "tinny" paraphrase of the best-known Churchillian peroration. In their original setting these words summon an ancient nation to preserve its life against a barbaric foe; in the present setting, almost the same words call politicians to gather votes. As Quintilian says, "Those who wish to appear knowing among fools, among the knowing seem foolish."

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*"But even more harmful than the actual precepts of early grammatical teaching is the spirit, the general attitude to grammar, which so often pervades it. The whole emphasis is laid on telling people what cannot or ought not to be done with the language, and they are left with an abiding impression that English is after all not an instrument for saying what they think and feel, but a vast collection of booby traps, into which they are doomed to fall with ignominious regularity through their lack of grammatical knowledge. . . . To remove this fear of grammar, this sense of uneasiness in writing and even in speaking, is the first essential piece of aid that can be given in the use of English—a more lively and living English. But it can only be removed if the average user of English is put in a position to understand just how and why his early grammatical education has left him in the lurch, and also given a more hopeful and useful kind of grammar to take its place."*

Hugh Sykes Davis in *Grammar Without Tears*

# Letters to the Editor

## What Is Misspelling?

### *To the Editors of "College English"*

Early in his impressive "Spelling Report" in the November *College English*, Thomas Clark Pollock refers to the reasons why he had to reject some 8,000 items submitted by almost 600 college teachers—more than 13 words per teacher. Some, he says, were the correct spellings; some were options recognized by a reputable dictionary; and several thousand items (here I am guessing) were words that could just as well be marked "diction" or "tense" or "case" as "spelling."

I am sure that Dean Pollock and other investigators have wished many times for a rule on what *is* misspelling, not only because it would save many hours, but because the inclusion of many miswritings mislabelled misspelling helps to invalidate the investigator's conclusions about spelling.

So it is pertinent to ask, "What *is* misspelling?" How well do teachers of composition agree on what kinds of miswriting are to be called misspelling? This commentary does not intend to answer the question, but it does propose to raise it, and perhaps tack down the corners.

About two years ago, having written "Spelling F" twelve times on the first set of themes from a retarded section, I regarded the set, marking *sp* only those miswritings which could not possibly be labelled "diction," "homonym," "tense," "case," etc.—and found that there were now only five spelling F's in the set. The *quasi* misspellings I then wove into a synthetic theme to be mimeographed. Since then, 25 college and 50 high school English teachers have helped to enlarge the question by marking the synthetic

theme. Here it is, preceded by the simple instructions. (The number after each miswriting shows the percentage of teachers who marked it a misspelling.)

What *is* misspelling? This is a composite of some puzzlers:

Please encircle *only* the words you consider *misspelled*. One disadvantage of the freshmen (67) dormitories is that they are on the south side of the tracts (83)—a handle (80) place to be killed. But a grater (91) disadvantage is the noise from the cars, the trains, and most of all the radios. Closing the door may do little good; the radio may happen to be your roommate (9) or next-door neighbor (7).

The dormitories also offer the freshman his greatest advantage, a good place to live. The paint on the wall and sealings (87) are light-coloured (56). The rooms are neat; it is easy to keep one's cloths (85) clean (25) up enough too (61) look respectable. Their (79) convenient, two (77): the laboratories (36) in each room makes (52) it handy for the students. One can now shave without going down a long haul (91).

When tabulated, the results showed the same inconsistency in both groups' markings that I had already noticed in my own. No teacher marked all 16 of the possibilities, or 15, or 14. Five per cent of the teachers found 13 misspellings in the synthetic theme; another 5 per cent found none at all. More than 20 per cent marked 12 misspellings, but another 20 per cent marked only from 1 to 8.

The high school teachers applied the label "misspelling" more freely than the college teachers did, except to the homonym *tracts* and the possessives *roommate* and *neighbor*. On 10 of the 16 miswritings, however, the two groups were



within 10 per cent of each other. Obviously, both groups need to decide what misspelling is.

Although the high school group was more likely to classify errors as misspellings, the college group was more inconsistent in its marking. In fact, two words on which the college teachers were most inconsistent are next to the top of Professor Pollock's list of words most often misspelled by college students! A resounding 56 per cent of the college teachers did not consider *too* (for *to*) a misspelling, whereas only 32 per cent did not mark *two* (for *too*). The very first word in Professor Pollock's first college list is *their*. In the synthetic theme 32 per cent of the college teachers did not consider *their* (for *they're*) a misspelling. How many of our colleagues would not have marked *there* (for *their*) a misspelling is anybody's guess—but the guess should not be anywhere near 32 per cent. We are not that consistent.

Are possessives and plurals tests of spelling? Is the wrong tense or person a wrong spelling? Is disagreement misspelling? If the college teachers I consulted are representative, many college teachers

already agree that miswritten possessives, plurals, tenses, and persons are not misspellings; hence inconsistencies in marking such words may almost disappear as soon as the rest of us shift into step.

Removing homonyms from the misspelling category is made even more difficult because many of the handbooks not only fail to distinguish between homonyms and pseudo-homonyms, but even list a dozen or so of the same pairs under both Spelling on 287 and Diction on 359. There seems to be only one way to transfer homonyms from Spelling, where they probably don't belong, to Diction, where they probably do: a simple declaration of policy, painstakingly adhered to, by the instructor.

If the instructor's spelling policy excludes possessives, plurals, tenses, and persons, as well as homonyms, it may help him to stress the essentials. It will certainly keep him from making misspelling a catchall category in which to place almost any word that is miswritten.

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## The Utilization of Methodological Consciousness

To the Editors of "College English"

When I suddenly found myself with a Ph.D. in English Literature, and a job as coordinator and evaluator—that was the title—Coordinator and Evaluator—of an experimental course in English Composition, I thought I had better find out what a composition course should do. In four years of graduate work nobody had mentioned what I ought to teach the Freshmen when I finally got a job. Of course no one had said anything about how to coordinate and evaluate an experimental course in English Composition, either, but I *had* been taught that first things should come first, and it was evident that the first thing to decide on was how to write, so

that I could pass the information on to the staff and thus, indirectly, to the students.

About all I knew was how *not* to write, or perhaps I should say, *one* way not to write: I felt that I could face my classes with confidence and say, "Don't write like social scientists." This I had learned from an article written for *The Journal of General Education* by a composition teacher, analysing the faults of the writing done by social scientists. The author gave me some examples of social "scientese" which I found convincing: "The implementation of the analysis given here would demand a field project incorporating the type of methodological conscious-

ness advocated above. Thus we need to utilize standard projective devices, but must be prepared to develop, in terms of situational demands, additional analytic instruments." "To be compatible, patterns should be adapted to the following components: (1) the *hominid component*, which is the biological human being; (2) the *social component*, which includes the potentialities for social relations as they are affected by 'the number of human beings in the situation, their distribution in space, their ages, their sex, their native ability to inter-stimulate and interact, the interference of environmental hindrances or helps and the presence and amount of certain types of social or. . .'"

This was more than enough for me, and I decided that since the author had been able to choose his examples of bad writing so unerringly, he would be a man to follow as a guide. It was easy to follow him. He had broken his essay into numbered sections, and each section was headed with a question, which was answered by that section. "Is social science writing marred by 'pedantic empiricism'?" "Does social science writing suffer from a melioristic bias?" And so on. But it wasn't only in the headings to the sections that he set me an example. He gave a lot of good round sentences to imitate. "Such language, when used to express the phenomenology of social and political behavior, gives a curious impression of being foreign to its subject matter." "We are therefore justified in asking some questions about the sociologists' addiction to polysyllabic vocabulary." By the time I was through with him, he had me completely convinced not only that the sociologists have the habit of using long words, but that they will get over it only by studying the writing of composition teachers.

Having had such luck with one English teacher, I decided to try some more of them. So I took out from the library all the back issues of *College English*. I didn't find as much as I had hoped about

how to write, but there was a lot on how to teach other people how to write. "An Integrated Four-Skills Communication Experience," describing the Freshman course at the University of M. . . . , I found suggestive in its implications—that is, provocative in its overtones. "What makes a conversation interesting? That is the question I use to set the stage for a number of functional assignments designed to teach more effective communication. Student attention is readily focused on the problem of how to communicate personal experiences in an interesting and satisfying manner. A preliminary class discussion invariably gives the teacher an opportunity to emphasize the frequency and importance of such conversational raw material.

"Here in summary form is the procedure followed:

1. Purposive listening. . . .
2. Purposive writing. . . .
3. Purposive reading. . . .
4. Purposive speaking (and listening). . . .

"This purposeful integration of the four language skills around simulated life-situations should tend to break down classroom barriers and develop an awareness and concern with language that will carry over into life—into conversation with its speaking and listening facets, into letter-writing, and into reading. And this approach is sufficiently functional to motivate strong student interest and sufficiently adaptable to meet the needs of almost any class."

This gave me security in meeting my first classes, but it left me a little doubtful about what to do during the second semester, after we were all integrated functionally. This didn't bother me long. Another article written four months later straightened me out. "At least one thing is clear: those who clamor for curricular reforms possess as a rule no adequate understanding of the newer trends in the study of the English language as a vehicle of thought and feeling, its com-

municative range, its complexity, its semantic ambiguities, and its vast, still unexplored potentialities. Such understanding would readily enable them to perceive that the study of English cuts across all departmental boundary lines, that it is not only a tool of thought and a medium of communication but also the expression of a personality, a means of comprehending one's self as well as others. The answer to the hostile critics and doubting Thomases must be stated in convincing, affirmative terms, or the English curriculum will be stripped of its educationally most valuable features."

Once you understand this passage most of your classroom problems are solved. You have only to say to your football players—communicators all—that the study of English is not only a tool of thought and a medium of communication but also the expression of a personality and a means of comprehending one's self as well as others. That the *study* of English is itself a tool of thought and a medium of communication was perhaps the most liberating concept I derived from my course of reading. To *know* is to be secure, and I found that I could now face my own classes with a great deal of confidence.

Although I hadn't found out much about how to write as yet, I felt that I was now ready to learn the objectives of the composition course as a whole; even from what I had read so far, it was clear to me that, as coordinator and evaluator, I must have some defined objectives. I didn't find any really satisfying ones until I had gone back to the October 1949 issue, but they were clear enough there.

Good communication is that which is clear, socially acceptable, effective, and socially responsible. Communication is clear when it results from an awareness, conscious or unconscious, of the signs of structural meaning (grammatical form and structure); it is clear when it is unambiguous, structurally and lexically, and when it is

organized in terms of purpose and intention. Communication is socially acceptable when it is free from readily determined illiteracies and when it is characterized by observation of current and linguistically valid conventions. Communication is socially acceptable when it is acceptable to the community in which the user lives and works. Communication is effective when it is forthright, simple, specific, and adaptable to the audience in intention, tone, meaning, and construction. Communication is socially responsible when it is grounded in observable fact, in honestly contrived opinion, in an awareness of personal and social bias, when it contributes to understanding and harmony among the greatest number in a democratic society.

The objectives of the course are derived from the basic definition. Very briefly stated and without the numerous subheads, they are as follows. Good communication: demands a knowledge of how people think; is adapted to the audience situation; has a definite if not a defined purpose; must have a central idea or governing theme; demands a selection of pertinent, adequate, and effective materials; has a definite pattern of organization; uses those methods of development which most effectively accomplish the purpose and develop the idea; demands a knowledge of the symbolic nature of language and its history; must meet certain social standards of effectiveness and acceptability.

I realized immediately that this not only defined my objectives as a teacher but it solved my earlier problem by giving the fullest possible description of how one should write. What I did was mimeograph these definitions and objectives and distribute them to my staff, and I had smooth sailing throughout the year. One instructor, it is true, claimed one day in staff meeting that my communication was not socially acceptable because it was not free from readily determined illiteracies and was not characterized by observation of current and linguistically valid conventions. He had me, and I confessed that he had me, even though, as I said at the time, my speech is characterized by observation of *all* the *nonlinguistically* valid conventions.

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# Current English

CONDUCTED BY THE NCTE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE<sup>1</sup>

## Is it Really *We*?

We English teachers are sometimes uneasy as we teach the personal pronoun forms used as subjective complement. In formal Standard English we are fairly confident, from personal observation, that the nominative forms hold the field. But with regard to informal Standard English we are nibbled by nits of doubt. When we tell our classes that "It's me" is acceptable in speech, an inquiring student is sure to ask, "Then is it all right to say 'It is *him*, this is *her*, it was *us*, and it must have been *them*?' " It's a fair question; the student wants a guiding principle. And we are unable to answer it with assurance because we lack evidence on the forms actually used in living speech.

It is the purpose of what follows to offer evidence that may contribute to a description of the present use of such pronouns. But first let us glance at the background of the problem.

The story begins about 1540 with a familiar-looking rule of Latin grammar:

Sum [Latin for *I am*] . . . [and a few other Latin verbs] will have *suche* case after them, as they have before them.<sup>2</sup>

The book in which it appeared became known as *Lily's Grammar* and was destined to become the most famous Latin grammar in England. It was the school-book of Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope,

Samuel Johnson, and others who made English literature. And well into the 19th century "nearly every English schoolboy studied Lily's Grammar, as did many a young American."<sup>3</sup> Thus the rule was known by everyone who studied Latin, in other words by everyone who went to school.

Now let us move up into the second half of the 18th century. In this period a spate of English grammars began to pour off the presses. They were written by Latinists, who wished to give to English the polish, perfection, and regularity that they admired in Latin. It is not surprising then to find the rule borrowed from Latin grammar and applied to English grammar in these books. The 18th century offered the rule in two wordings. One of these closely follows Lily:

The verb *to be*, through all its variations, has the same case after it, as that which next preceded it.<sup>4</sup>

This is the version of Lindley Murray. The number of his various grammars that were printed soared over the million mark. Imitators arose, and Murray's rule was pinballed from book to book right down to the present, and is still with us today. In one widely used text, for instance, the high school student reads this startling news:

The verb *to be* and other linking verbs take the same case after them as before them.<sup>5</sup> The second 18th century wording of the

<sup>1</sup> Margaret M. Bryant, *chairman*, Harold B. Allen, Adeline C. Bartlett, Archibald A. Hill, Kemp Malone, James B. McMillan, Albert H. Marckwardt, Russell Thomas, John N. Winburne, Brice Harris, *ex officio*.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent J. Flynn, ed., *A Shorte Introduction of Grammar by William Lily* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1945), no pagination.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv. The information in this paragraph is drawn from Flynn's introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Lindley Murray, *English Exercises, Murray's English Grammar* (Utica: William Williams, 1819), p. 124. Murray's first grammar appeared in 1795.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Tressler, *English in Action, Course IV, Fifth Edition* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1950), p. 345.



rule is illustrated by Lowth's version:

The verb to be always has a Nominative case after it.<sup>6</sup> This form has also been hardy. It has floated down the stream of grammars in England and the United States for nearly two centuries, and today it bobbles up in numerous college handbooks.<sup>7</sup>

Now, the Latin provenience of the rule would be nothing against it if it described English usage accurately. And in fairness to writers of college handbooks, who are mainly concerned with written English of a rather formal sort, we must acknowledge that it seems to be an accurate enough statement of the prevailing practice in formal Standard English. Some textbooks, however, making no distinctions among the social levels and functional varieties of English, present the rule as a universal ukase, applicable to every occasion from tails to T-shirts. Here we cannot string along, for the nominative forms after *to be* in spoken English sometimes sound jangled, out of tune, and harsh to our ears. And we ask ourselves, "Precisely how are these pronouns used by men of affairs and education and social status?"

Data on this problem was gathered in 1952 at the Academic Instructor Division of the Air Command and Staff School, Maxwell Air Force Base.<sup>8</sup> In the course of a year, over a thousand officers and

<sup>6</sup>Robert Lowth, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (London: Dodsley, 1762), p. 105.

<sup>7</sup>See, for example, the *Macmillan Handbook of English*, *Harper Handbook of College Composition*, and *Harbrace College Handbook*.

<sup>8</sup>Captain William Clark and the writer conducted the project together.

airmen were given a listening survey of word usage which included 32 sentences with personal pronouns as subjective complements. These sentences were scattered at random amid other items. The directions that were addressed to the questionees placed them in an informal party situation during which they heard fragments of conversation. These conversational sentences, they were told, would be read to them by the examiner. Then they were to respond to these directions: "Write a plus on your answer sheet if it is a sentence that *you* might normally and comfortably use in conversation with your friends in this situation. Write a zero if it is a sentence that *you* would avoid using in conversation with your friends in this situation." The sentences were read at a conversational tempo and an immediate response was required, no time being allowed for prolonged deliberation.

Of all the survey forms answered, exactly 519 were turned in by officers who met two qualifications: (1) they were college graduates; (2) they held a rank of captain or higher. These officers came from many walks of life and from all parts of the United States. Thus they may be considered a fair sampling of Standard English speakers.

A table of results is given below. The symbols in the left-hand column represent, with changes in terms, the classificatory scheme used by Sterling A. Leonard in *Current English Usage*. Items approved by at least 75 per cent are labeled SE (Standard English). Items disapproved by more than 75 per cent are labeled Non (Nonstandard English). Those in between are called D (divided usage).

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO LISTENING SURVEY OF WORD USAGE  
(Subjective complement items only)

Status	Plus	Zero	
			I. Subjective complement after 's verbs
D	301	218	1. It's they who got the clearance.
Non	77	442	2. It's them who borrowed the tools.
SE	410	109	3. It's he who told us.
Non	75	444	4. It's him who is always using the visual aids.
D	272	247	5. It's we who will get a cross-country next week.

Status	Plus	Zero
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<i>D</i>	206	313
<i>D</i>	284	235
<i>D</i>	305	214
<i>SE</i>	412	107
<i>D</i>	288	231
<i>Non</i>	86	433
<i>SE</i>	399	120

6. It's us who always get the blame.
7. That's him in the blue uniform.
8. That's he at the next table.
9. That's she over there.
10. That's her over there.
11. It's me who saw the two planes crash.
12. It's I who reported the accident.

## II. Subjective complement after negative verbs

<i>D</i>	137	382
<i>D</i>	243	276
<i>D</i>	186	333
<i>SE</i>	392	127

13. It isn't they that I want to finish the job.
14. It isn't them that I hold responsible.
15. It wasn't her who parked in front of the door.
16. It wasn't she who typed the letter.

## III. Subjective complement with compound verbs

<i>D</i>	380	139
<i>D</i>	193	326
<i>D</i>	281	238
<i>D</i>	161	358
<i>D</i>	337	182
<i>Non</i>	86	433
<i>D</i>	183	336
<i>D</i>	371	148

17. It must have been he who overshot the field.
18. It must have been him who used the mimeograph this morning.
19. It might have been they who mislaid the inspection forms.
20. It might have been them who misread the weather report.
21. It may be she who was wanted by the police.
22. It may be her who asked about your sewing machine.
23. It might be we who will get the contract.
24. It might be us who will be chosen.

## IV. Subjective complement in questions

<i>Non</i>	111	408
<i>D</i>	369	150
<i>SE</i>	412	107
<i>D</i>	144	375
<i>D</i>	295	224
<i>D</i>	356	163
<i>D</i>	291	228
<i>D</i>	332	187

25. Was it them who removed the wheel blocks?
26. Was it they who were first in line?
27. Was it he who borrowed my load adjustor?
28. Was it him who was dancing with Jane?
29. Is it me you want?
30. Is it I you mentioned?
31. Could it have been her?
32. Could it have been she?

From this data can we draw any conclusions about the use of the nominative and objective forms of personal pronouns in the subjective complement function in spoken informal Standard English? There are two that seem tentatively justified. (1) The choice of case form is a matter of divided usage. (2) The tendency is

toward the use of the nominative. However, before we can reach solid conclusions we need much careful quantitative research, research which gathers its records from the spontaneous utterances that constitute our living language.

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## News and Ideas

A. J. M. SMITH, THE NOTED Canadian poet now teaching at Michigan State College, contributes to the autumn *Queen's Quarterly* an essay, "Refining Fire: The Meaning and Use of Poetry." He stresses that it is just as important to be a good reader of poetry as to be a good poet, for the meaning and use of poetry are almost as dependent upon the reader as the poet. A poem, Smith says, is *not* the *description* of an experience. It is an experience which awakens in the mind of the receptive reader a new experience analagous to the one in the mind of the poet. "The more sensitive the reader and the better instructed he is, the closer will be his experience to that of the poet." The *value* of a poem, he continues, "lies in the intensity with which an experience has been encountered," and it is "the integrity, the clarity, and the completeness with which an experience is met" that counts in the evaluation not only of a poem's goodness but also of its usefulness. The most fundamental *use* of poetry is "the training, developing, exercising, and strengthening of the sensibilities themselves." We have forgotten, he thinks, that the reading of imaginative literature is itself an art, both a fine art and a useful art. To neglect it or to pay it mere lip service is to corrupt the spiritual life of the community.

IN "THE FITZGERALD REVIVAL" (January *South Atlantic Quarterly*) Albert J. Lubbell reminds us that we should not let the revival blind us to the fact that although Fitzgerald's talent was equal to that of any of the novelists who emerged in the twenties, his was largely an unfulfilled promise. In Lubbell's opinion no amount of reviving can make him a significant figure in postwar American letters. He will be remembered only for *The Great Gatsby*, one of the best novels of the twenties, and for about

nine stories, first rate by any standards. "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," Lubbell thinks, is as good as anything of that type that Poe ever wrote. Others on his list include: "The Ice Palace," "May Day," "Absolution," "The Rich Boy," "Winter Dreams," "Babylon Revisited," "Crazy Sunday," and "The Cut Glass Bowl."

THE RENEWED INTEREST IN Tennyson's poetry after a period of neglect is discussed by Samuel C. Burchell in "Tennyson's Dark Night" (January *South Atlantic Quarterly*). This rebirth of his reputation has its center in "In Memoriam," although today's readers, unlike their Victorian predecessors, are interested not in the poem's consolation but in the individual lyric passages which comprise "the fragmentary autobiography of a haunted spirit." Burchell quotes from T. S. Eliot's analysis of the poem: "It is not religious because of the quality of its faith, but because of the quality of its doubt. Its faith is a poor thing, but its doubt is a very intense experience." And Burchell points out that the theme of "In Memoriam" is the same as that of Eliot's "Ash Wednesday." We have learned to deal more honestly with our uncertainty than the average Victorian poet, he thinks, and that is why the quality of doubt in Tennyson's poem has renewed our interest in it.

"TIME AND THE NOVELIST" BY David Paul in the autumn *Hudson Review* makes clear the changing methods by which the novelists of the past hundred years have handled the problem of time. For the novelist, Paul notes, his work resolves itself into two questions: what to do with himself in narrative, and what to do with time. In a story, time is under the control of the narrator, and "every story is an attempt to beguile time with

an artificial version of it." The novel is the freest of all literary forms. Fielding, Richardson, and Sterne had to contrive barriers against the chaos of too much freedom. Sterne, for example, couldn't cope with the time dimension at all, so in *Tristram Shandy* we have a talkative book—the confirmed talker takes no account of time. For the Victorian novelists, time was a simple convention observed almost unconsciously. The first break in the smoothness of Victorian narrative came when in *The Longest Journey* E. M. Forster caused time to stand still for long intervals during which the characters were held in unbecoming or false positions. Since then there have been many experiments. In the novels of Ivy Compton Burnett, time comes to a stop in the 1890's. Gertrude Stein "drives the clock crazy by smashing up time sequence even with the syntax of a single sentence." For Virginia Woolf, time "flows back into prose on the tide of poetic obsession, of sibylline trance." Huxley and Isherwood redistribute time to present the end at the beginning, to show characters as they will be before they are shown as they were. Proust's use of time depends upon "a bifocal use of the function of memory." "The past is seen as the past and as a present painfully and ecstatically restored. There is always the double presence of Proust as he was, and Proust as he is at the moment of remembering and writing."

A FOURTEENTH CENTURY manuscript, "The Equatorie of the Planetis," was discovered recently in the library of Cambridge University by a young historian of science, Derek Price. A planetary equatorium is a computer for finding the places of the planets. Chaucer wrote his "Treatise on the Astrolabe" for "litel Lewis" in 1391. This manuscript has a signature which appears to read CHAU, makes frequent reference to the year 1392, and is written in Middle English. Moreover both the handwriting and

the linguistic analysis, as well as a mass of lesser evidence, also seem to suggest that it is a Chaucer holograph. A full edition with facsimilies and notes will shortly be published by the Cambridge University Press.

LEVETTE J. DAVIDSON'S "FACT or Formula in 'Western' Fiction" (winter *Colorado Quarterly*) defends the West from the caricature of it common in so-called "Western" fiction. He praises H. L. Davis and Walter Van Tilburg Clark but does not mention A. B. Guthrie. The body of his article is an informal bibliography of sources where one may find the West depicted as it was, and to some extent still is.

THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS committee asked 1700 booksellers and reviewers to name the outstanding books of 1954. The most recommended novels, arranged alphabetically by authors, are: *The Dollmaker*, *The View from Pompey's Head*, *A Fable*, *The Night of the Hunter*, *Pictures from an Institution*, *The Last Hunt*, *Lord Grizzly*, *The Bad Seed*, *The Huge Season*, *The Courts of Memory*, and *Sweet Thursday*.

The *Saturday Review* has also conducted its annual poll of reviewers and specialists. It reports *The Dollmaker* recommended ten times, and *The View from Pompey's Head* six times. Besides these only *A Fable* and *Sweet Thursday* are on both lists.

The Book Awards poetry list: *Poems: A Collection* (Leonie Adams), *Collected Poems* (Louise Bogan), *Poems, 1923-1954* (Cummings), *Hungerfield and Other Poems* (Jeffers), *Songs for Eve* (MacLeish), *The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley*, *The Verse-Diary of a Psychiatrist* (Merrill Moore), *A Character Invented* (LeRoy Smith), *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*, *The Desert Music and Other Poems* (W. C. Williams) and *Selected Poems* (Zaturenska).

In the *Saturday Review* poll the Cum-



mings and Stevens collections were mentioned eight times each. The McGinley, W. C. Williams, Adams, and Zaturenska books were also listed.

THE 1954 NATIONAL BOOK Awards have been given as follows: *fiction*, to William Faulkner for *The Fable*; *nonfiction*, to Joseph Wood Krutch for *The Measure of Man*; *poetry*, to Wallace Stevens for his *Collected Poems*. A special citation was given to E. E. Cummings for *Poems: 1923-1954*.

WILL THE PAPERBACK BOOKS continue? Nineteenth-century ventures of a similar sort came to grief, and 1954 was a bad year for most of the paperback houses. A report of "The Success of the Highbrow Paperbacks," by Seymour Krim in the December 20 *New Republic* tells us that Doubleday's "Anchor Books," Knopf's "Vintage Books," and "Penguin Books" all seem to be making a profit. These are substantial books for which there is a fairly steady, moderate demand, and they are sold only through bookstores, which get the usual hardcover percentage of profit. Four more low-priced series are starting this spring: Doubleday's "Image Books" (all Catholic), Noonday Press's "Meridian Books," the Grove Press line, and "Anvil" originals. Mr. Krim hints competition in this field from such houses as Harcourt, Viking, and Random is imminent.

One thinks back to the *Saturday Review* article of November 6, "The Booming Bust of the Paperbacks," in which Thomas E. Cooney explained that fifteen publishers of such books putting out several volumes every month crowded the display racks of the drugstores so much that all but the latest and the fastest-moving titles were turned back to the wholesaler, and to the publisher. Not enough copies can be sold in one month to make a paperback break even. This reasoning does not apply at present to the highbrow series distributed through the

bookstores, but may it not if their number also multiplies rapidly? One guesses from the available facts that some of these publishers must be forced out of business or all of them must reduce the number of new titles each month—or all of them go bankrupt, as their predecessors did a century ago.

"NEWSPAPERS SHOULDN'T play God" is the title and the burden of Herbert Brucker's leading article in the January 1 *Saturday Review*. Since we cannot foresee the effect of suppression or publication of any news item (except, of course, military secrets) newspapers should get the news and print all without coloring. News is not just what happens, but what happens that people are interested in. Brucker gives examples of good results from the publication of apparently unfortunate items, and harm arising from one attempt at suppression. This article might start a warm—and useful, if well guided—class discussion.

THE ANNUAL NCTE COLLEGE section dinner held in New York at the time of the Modern Language Association meetings under the chairmanship of S. D. Stephens, Rutgers University, was a gracious and informative occasion. About fifty persons attended. The speakers were Thomas Clark Pollock, Dean of Washington Square College, New York University, and David Dodds Henry, president-elect of the University of Illinois.

Professor Pollock reported briefly upon a current study, still in the exploratory stages, of the American Council of Learned Societies, which is sponsoring a commission to determine the various areas of cooperation in which the member societies might participate. It is hoped thereby to bridge the chasm between the members of learned societies and the people responsible for the direction of American education. The intent is *not* to attack the public schools, but to find ways of achieving effective communicative relations and

to encourage individual societies to plan individual programs and work out procedures with each other.

Dr. Henry discussed the progress of educational television, its opportunities, and problems. He reminded us that only nine years ago television was still in the laboratory stage, yet in a short time has captured the public more dramatically even than did the automobile and radio. There are now 35 million sets reaching 100 million people. The core of the problem is to make people understand the potential comprehensiveness of educational television and to get it into the mainstream of educational usage at all levels—preschool, primary, secondary, college, adult, home-study, general culture, etc. It must be regarded as another means of education, like the textbook, to supplement, *not* to replace the older methods, and its development should be moulded by teachers, *not* by the industry. It is the responsibility of *teachers* to demonstrate to the FCC their interest in keeping allocations for educational television, to encourage more stations to go on the air, to help stabilize the top programs, and to secure more public understanding and support; in short, to participate instead of standing aloof.

EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION continues to grow. Eight stations are now on the air, five VHF and three UHF, and almost 15,000,000 persons live within their range. Two more stations, scheduled to begin broadcasting in January, may be operating now. Eleven other communities have the money in the bank and the stations building. Twenty-three more have the plans well advanced. A somewhat surprising fact is that half the time goes to programs for adults, partly because of the popularity of high and college credit courses. Language courses are the most common.

THE MOVIES EXERT A TREMENDOUS power in stimulating reading, according to Hardy Finch in the January, 1955 *Scholastic Teacher*. The *Red*

*Badge of Courage*, not a box office success, stirred up such interest among teenagers that they bought more than 50,000 copies of the book in the Teen-Age Book Club paperback edition. In three months, TAB Club members bought more than 40,000 copies of *The Magnificent Obsession* after seeing the film. More than 50,000 copies of *Shane* were purchased by TAB members following the film showing. Mr. Finch quotes Emily Jones, executive secretary of the Educational Film Library Association as saying, "Any time a movie made from a well-known book opens in a neighborhood, the local library reports a run on the book by young people."

READING IS ALSO SPURRED BY Television according to a recent report of the British Library Association, which pats television for the fact that Britons are reading more library books than ever—370,600,000 in the year ended last March. The Association explains that TV shows have increased interest in such subjects as archaeology, ballet, social problems and do-it-yourself handicrafts, creating a huge demand for books about them.

THE EVOLUTIONARY CHANGES in stage design since 1900 are described by Arch Lauterer in the October *Journal* of the American Association of University Women. Briefly, these trends can be explained by prepositions indicating the dominant relation of the actors' movements to the scene as follows: 1900—"in front" as the actor played his role primarily in front of the painted background; 1900-1918—"in" for now the actor was involved in the *representation* of an act that aimed to create the illusion of everyday life; 1918—"upon," to describe the vogue of a series of steps and levels in the scene; 1920—"around," since the "upon" trend was almost immediately joined with that of the art movement termed "expressionism" wherein the stage artist turned to the designing of scenic

shapes as objects around which the actors moved; 1925—"through," settings were designed so the audience could see through all walls that had hitherto been opaque. From 1925-1940 there was no dominant trend, but meanwhile the films had progressed technically from camera closeups into sound and then into the earliest innovations of color photography. From 1940 on there has been a general trend toward "out"—out toward the audience, which the innovations of cinerama and 3D films continue. Lauterer explicates with many interesting illustrations.

LAST MARCH COLLEGE ENGLISH printed an English translation by Joseph Prescott, Wayne University, of the late George Borach's "Conversations with James Joyce" which in the original German had appeared in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (1931). Prescott's translation has now been reprinted by the Australian *Meanjin* (Spring, 1954), by *The London Magazine* (November), and, translated into French, by *Les Lettres Nouvelle* (August).

MEANJIN IS A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE of "Literature, Art, and Discussion" published at the University of Melbourne. It includes original stories and poems, literary and political essays, notes on music and art, and book reviews. An article in the spring issue on "Australian Literature and the Universities" by W. Mulgate and A. Norman Jeffares seems to indicate that a movement which parallels that in "American Studies" is now gathering momentum. Increased emphasis on the study of Australian literature is being urged. Lectures on Australian literature are normally given in English departments and graduate students frequently do theses in the field, but there have been no formally organized courses. Considerable inter-university discussion and debate are now taking place concerning the proper university level at which Australian literature should be investi-

gated and interpreted. Some teachers believe that a thorough training in English literature should precede a formal course in Australian. Others think it should be included in the freshman course. Somehow all this has a familiar ring, and Australia no longer seems so far away!

LOU LABRANT'S ADDRESS LAST year to the famous Asilomar Conference in California appears in the *California Journal of Secondary Education* for December. First, some facts about our language: The grammar of English is very simple but its spelling is very complex and difficult. Spoken by 250,000,000 people, it is becoming one of the two languages of diplomacy, is used by radio, motion picture, television, and comic strip, and the thoughts of civilized men over 6,000 years have been written in or translated into it. When present adults were small, a human voice meant a person present. The rising generation has been conditioned from infancy to disembodied radio voices which must most of the time be blocked out. The written word is our richest bond with the past, and confidence that we are projecting our civilization into the future is among our greatest securities and reassurance in the face of threats of annihilation.

But we have not succeed as well as we wish in *teaching* it. The United States is *not* first in (1) percentage of literacy, (2) number of new books per year, (3) reading of books per capita, or (4) reading of newspapers per capita. We lead—slightly—in movie going and reading "comics."

We may judge our success by asking such questions as these: (1) How well do our students talk—exchange human experience? (2) How well do our students listen? Do they know whether they are moved only emotionally and not rationally? (3) Are our students reading? Finding it a satisfying experience and likely to continue reading? Learning to select their own books? Reading critically? (4) Are our students writing—



saying what is in their minds? (5) In the classroom is there evidence of *responsible* use of language?

TWO NEW FRESHMAN-WRITING magazines have recently appeared, one at the University of Notre Dame, the other at Purdue University. "New Beginnings" (Volume I, 1953-54) is the first issue of a magazine containing superior writing of students in the freshman English course at Notre Dame. Twenty-five selections in 37 printed pages, prepared under the supervision of Robert Christin, chairman of freshman English. Three issues of "Trial Flight" have now been issued at Purdue. The October number contains twelve pages (mimeographed) of fifteen themes by freshman students. Both publications are being used by this year's students. Copies of "Trial Flight" are available for the cost of postage (12 cents). Address: Department of English, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

THE NORTH CAROLINA *English Teacher* for December opens with a blast by Earl H. Hartsell, executive secretary of the NCETA, on "Promotion Standards and the English Teacher." Automatic promotions and too ready early classification of some pupils as non-verbal and therefore not to be required to do much in reading or writing are his chief targets. The same magazine contains several sample themes with evaluation by the freshman English staff of the University of North Carolina.

"CAMPUS WRITING TODAY" IS to be the title of a new national review of the best college writing scheduled to make its debut next fall. It will be edited by Nolan Miller (novelist) and Judson Jerome (poet) both members of the Department of English, Antioch College, and published by Bantam Books. Stories, poems, portions of novels, short plays, and articles and essays of timely interest will be included. Contributors must be currently enrolled students or persons who

have attended college as graduates or undergraduates within the past three years. Contributions must be unpublished (except in a campus magazine) and recommended by a member of a teaching faculty. Manuscripts may be submitted at any time, but material for the first issue must be in by May 1, 1955. Contributions will be paid for on acceptance. For further information address: *Campus Writing Today*, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

FREE WRITING HAS BECOME A part of the junior college English program in Kansas. Not all college freshmen attempt it because the work is done over and beyond the usual assignments, but the students who do it—for pleasure—bring their manuscripts to their teacher for reading, discussion, and suggestion. The December issue of the *Bulletin* of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English (12 pp.) is comprised of representative work submitted from all parts of the state. Many manuscripts equally good but crowded out for lack of space have been retained for exhibit at state English meetings.

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA University has announced that a grant of \$10,000 for graduate fellowships has been made to the College by the Macmillan Company, publishers. The grants are intended to advance knowledge of the teaching of reading and other language arts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA has announced that a grant of \$107,000 has been made to the Program in American Studies at the University by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The funds will be used over a period of four years to strengthen the present activities in American Studies and to underwrite new projects. As part of the extended program graduate fellowships ranging from \$2000 to \$4000 per student will be awarded annually from 1955 through 1958 to candidates for the doc-



toral degree in American Studies. The fellows will do no teaching but will devote all their time to study and research. Applicants must hold a degree in one of the humanities, in one of the social sciences, or in American civilization.

BARNARD COLLEGE HAS ANNOUNCED a gift of \$100,000 to establish the Millicent Carey McIntosh Professorship of English Fund.

"LITERARY CRITICISM TODAY" will be the subject discussed at the 1955 spring symposium of the Catholic Renaissance Society, April 12-13 at the Hotel Pfister, Milwaukee. Among the speakers will be Allen Tate, University of Minnesota, and his wife, the novelist, Caroline Gordon, William K. Wimsatt, Jr.,

and Aubrey Williams, both of Yale University, Richard Sullivan, University of Notre Dame, and Marshall McLuhan, University of Toronto. For details write: Executive Director, Catholic Renaissance, Mount Mary College, Milwaukee.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL MIDWEST English Conference will be held April 1-2 at Michigan State College, East Lansing. The purpose of the Conference is to provide an opportunity for college and high school teachers to discuss their mutual problems in small groups. This year the Conference will be focussed upon the problems of reading at the different levels. Russell B. Nye, Michigan State College, is this year's Conference chairman.

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*What Ever Happened to Saroyan?— [Concluded from page 340]*

sentimentalize it, and generally make it keep its distance.) / He changed the title of his most dismal play from "The Incurables" to "Don't Go Away Mad." He tried to lighten an act-long funeral ceremony by having burlesque comedians conduct the service while they played with yo-yos and rubber balls and blew tin horns. And some years ago he hailed George Bernard Shaw as the first man "to make a complete monkey out of death and of the theory [sic!] of dying in general." But one of Saroyan's own characters declares that "Death begins with helplessness, and it's impossible to joke about." Perhaps Saroyan has begun to suspect that for him, "Death is a lousy idea from which there is no escape."

The latest novel by Saroyan is called *The Laughing Matter* (1953). Set in the California vineyards and dealing with a family of Armenian heritage, the book has on its opening pages an atmosphere of love and warmth which recalls the earliest and best Saroyan. When the boy and girl of the family are the book's concern, their enjoyment of life and their sensitivity to the world around them—the

way they savor figs and grapes, drink in the warmth of the sun, wonder about the universe—are a delight. But before long, Saroyan is trying to handle adult problems and the tale bogs down. The children's mother has become pregnant through an adulterous relationship. The boy, confronted by the tragic situation which is rocking the security of his beautiful family, cries to the skies, "What was the matter? What was it, always? Why couldn't anything be the way it *ought* to be? Why was everything always strange, mysterious, dangerous, delicate, likely to break to pieces suddenly?" For although his father has taught him the Armenian words, "It is right," and although everybody chants them over and over (one wise member of the family insists, meaning it, "Whatever you do is right. If you hate, it is. If you kill, it is."), nevertheless, everything goes wrong and there is death and disaster, and there is futility in the face of imperfection. And after it all, at the end of the book, still crying like an echo in the wilderness, is the repeated refrain, "It is right!"

## Councilletter

The following nominations were submitted by the Nominating Committee of the NCTE College Section, T. A. Barnhart, Leslie Hanawalt, and James A. Work, chairman:

I. FOR THE SECTION COMMITTEE (*Two to be elected*)

LAURENCE MUIR, University of Arizona  
WARNER G. RICE, University of Michigan  
PHILIP W. SOUERS, University of Oregon  
LIZETTE VAN GELDER, Howard College

II. FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (*Two to be elected*)

RICHARD S. BEAL, Boston University  
ERNEST SAMUELS, Northwestern University  
GEORGE E. SMOCK, Indiana State Teachers College  
WILLIAM D. TEMPLEMAN, University of Southern California

Candidates for the Section Committee and for the Board of Directors are elected to serve three-year terms. Additional nominations may be made by petition signed by fifteen members of the Section and filed with the Executive Secretary of the Council, 704 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois. The election will be conducted by mail ballots sent out early in May, and the persons elected will begin their terms next November.

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One of the serious problems in any college that prepares teachers of English is building within the neophytes a strong professional spirit and an increased understanding of what "teaching English" really means.

In an attempt to take one step toward the solution of this problem, the Executive Committee of the Council wishes to encourage the formation of a Junior Affiliate in each institution that has twenty-five or more prospective English teachers—freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduates teaching no more than half time.

Junior Affiliates will plan their own social-professional programs, with students usually in charge. Nearby colleges may exchange programs.

Each member of a Junior Affiliate must be a junior member of the Council. For his \$1.75 a year he will receive the Council magazine of his choice, plus the privilege of purchasing Council publications, recordings, filmstrips, and literary maps at members' prices. He will not have voting privileges.

Each Junior Affiliate may name a liaison officer who will be eligible to attend Council Directors' meetings as a non-voting participant. Annual dues will be the same as for other affiliates: \$2.50 for membership of 25-49, \$5.00 for 50-149, \$10.00 for 150 or more.

One week after announcement of the Junior Affiliate plan at the Detroit convention, the first Junior Affiliate had been formed, under the sponsorship of Professor Francis Chisholm, at River Falls, Wisconsin. Before Christmas a second, sponsored by Professor Dora V. Smith, had been formed at the University of Minnesota. Any interested

college teacher may sponsor or encourage the creation of a Junior Affiliate in his school.

Questions may be addressed to the Executive Secretary.

J. N. Hook

DEAR COUNCIL MEMBER,

The National Council of Teachers of English, as befits its special character, is a communicator on a massive scale: it holds many meetings, makes many committee reports, issues several journals, and also publishes each year books both large and small. In performing the last-named service the Council addresses all levels of teachers and students and sells many thousands of copies of its publications. In the past the Council's booklists were its most widely sold publications and are still its best sellers. But other publications directed at teachers rather than students have recently been very widely sold.

Most ambitious of all the Council's publishing projects is the Language Arts Series, under Dr. Dora V. Smith's direction. In this series two volumes, *The English Language Arts* and *The Language Arts for Today's Children*, have already appeared. A third, dealing with English in the secondary schools, will appear this year; two others, discussing English on the college level, are in active preparation. In these five volumes the National Council will present its creed, its procedures, and its goals both to teachers and to the public at large. They are volumes which no English teacher should fail to read. He will find in them much that is valuable and stimulating, although naturally he will not agree with everything that is said in them.

In addition, several brochures have appeared in the past year. The new junior high school reading-list is ready—*Your Reading*, prepared by a committee of which Dr. Ellen Frogner is chairman. In accordance with the Council's long-standing policy of keeping its reading-lists in constant revision, a new edition of *Books*

for *You*, the senior high school reading-list, is now in course of preparation by a committee of which Dwight Burton, of Florida State University, is chairman. He will welcome any suggestions or comments sent to him for the improvement of the present list. Teachers interested in reading techniques and the responses of students will find of much value a Council brochure entitled, *Literature and Social Sensitivity*, by Walter Loban. This explores "the response of adolescents to literature involving values based on the concept of human dignity." From the National Conference on Research in English came the research bulletin *Interrelationships Among the Language Arts*.

Definitely practical is another publication—the *Handbook for Affiliates*, prepared by a committee of which William D. Herron was chairman and intended to produce closer relationships between the Council and its many and important affiliates.

In preparation are numerous other books and pamphlets—a revision, for example, of Constance Carr's widely read treatment of *Substitutes for the Comics*. Another on *Mass Media* is in preparation; and plans are being made for publication of several groups of articles in the fields of elementary and secondary English.

Many older publications of the Council are still being actively purchased. It may interest members of the Council to know that of these the one in greatest demand is C. C. Fries's *American English Grammar*.

Teachers interested in the purchase of Council publications who have not already received the attractive and useful catalogue, *Tools for Teaching English*, should write for a copy to the Council offices, 704 South Sixth St., Champaign, Ill. This

tells about our publications old and new, also describes the widely used recordings which the Council pioneered in making.

How do these publications originate? If you have an idea for a book or a pamphlet, how can you go about the task of preparing it for Council sponsorship? Most Council publications originate in the committees of the Council, frequently are based on reports of these committees. Many committees set out with the definite intention of producing reports that will in time become Council publications. By making reports worthy of publication they are enabled to reach many English teachers not on their committees and all of those who could not be present at any Council meeting where the topics of the reports were discussed. Occasionally an idea for a publication is presented by an individual, but before it can become a definite project of the Council it needs to be formally approved by the Executive Committee.

When a committee feels that its work should crystallize in a publication, its first procedure is to discuss the project with the Director of Publications and secure his suggestions. If several projects are all set for completion at a particular time, it may not be feasible to issue them all at that time; and the attempt is made to spread them out. When the manuscript is completed, the Executive Committee gives the Director of Publications the names of three readers, who are asked to appraise the proposed publication and make useful comments and suggestions. On the basis of their reports, as gathered by the Director of Publications, a recommendation to publish, to postpone, or not to publish is made to the Executive Committee. The careful preparation of our Council publications has won them esteem and circulation in educational and general circles.

MAX J. HERZBERG  
*Director of Publications*

## CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

MARCH 24-26

*Morrison Hotel, Chicago*

### PROGRAM SAMPLING

#### *General Session Topics*

Place of Literature in the Freshman Course  
Reorganization of the Ph.D. Program for Preparing College Teachers of English

#### *Panel Discussion Topics*

Problems and Techniques of Teaching Spelling  
Freshman Programs: a Series of Cases  
Shall We Teach Grammar?  
Encouraging Students to Become English Majors  
Reading Clinics: How They Operate and What They Accomplish

#### *New Workshops*

The Foreign Student in the Freshman Course  
Use of a Freshman Writing Periodical  
Writing Clinics  
Final Examinations in Composition and Communication



# New Books

## Professional

**GENERAL EDUCATION: EXPLORATIONS IN EVALUATION.** By Paul L. Dressel and Lewis B. Mayhew. Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1954, xxiv + 2198 pp. Cloth, \$3.50.

This book is the outcome and report of a cooperative study in the techniques and materials of evaluation in general education undertaken by a Committee on Measurement and Evaluation appointed by the American Council on Education. Nineteen colleges and universities participated. Four subject areas were studied: the social studies, communications, sciences, and the humanities. In addition, two "pervasive objectives" were investigated; namely, "critical thinking," and "attitudes." Participating committee members ranged in attitude from high enthusiasm to doubt and antagonism; the working committees were not without internal criticism.

From this book the interested reader may expect to gain (1) examples of tests and evaluative instruments in the subject matter and "pervasive objectives" of general education; (2) some evidence of gains made by students as found by pre- and post-testing; (3) the formulation of certain hypotheses concerning the objectives of general education and their measurement; and (4) changes brought about in the curriculum and procedures of the participating colleges as a result of the study. The report is well written and makes interesting reading; the tables of data, while numerous, are clearly set out and do not overweight the text.

No study of this magnitude can be summarized in a few words. Each reader, according to his past experiences, present task, and future hopes will find specific facts and generalizations of particular use to him. The significant outcome is that all the sectional reports come to one great, common conclusion: that the advancement of the goals of general education rests not upon the selection and refinement of subject matter, nor upon the improvement of teaching techniques, nor upon the quality

of measuring instruments, though all these are contributory; the advancement rests upon the development of the powers of critical thinking. The report ends with these words, "The implication, to us . . . is that the identification of one major objective such as critical thinking, the review of all research done upon this mental process, the observation and distillation of instructional practice most conducive to effective learning, the development of one or more integrated instructional programs aimed at the objective, and the evaluation of the results, constitute a major research task. . . . Comprehensive and complicated as such a research project would be . . . we believe [it] is the task that general education must undertake if it is to bring classroom practice and student achievement into a reasonable correspondence with its objectives."

ROBERT C. POOLEY

University of Wisconsin

**PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA.** *The Educational Policies Commission.* National Education Association. Pp. 98. \$1.50.

This well written plea that all Americans take a serious and responsible interest in our public schools does not concentrate upon the need for financial support. Rather, using a historical approach to the present situation, it emphasizes the purposes of education in a democracy which is a world leader, and stresses caring for the personal needs of individuals as well as the production of good workers and intelligent citizens. The history contains implications favorable to *public* schools, vocational education, availability of college education for all who want it and will profit by it. The book is for those present American leaders who are already somewhat interested in education.

**SCHOOLS IN TRANSITION: COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES IN DESEGREGATION.** Edited by Robin M. Williams, Jr. and Margaret W. Ryan.

University of North Carolina Press. Pp. 272. \$3.00.

An attempt, financed by the Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education, to report objectively the experiences of school systems which in advance of the Supreme Court decision moved from racial segregation to or toward desegregation. Forty-five scholars made careful study of twenty-four communities in states along the border of the South, from New Jersey to Arizona. The pictures vary from one community in chaos to another in which action, taken after preparation and firmly, caused little protest and no disturbance.

THE TEACHING OF LISTENING, A BIBLIOGRAPHY. *Prepared by Ruth Seeger*, Bureau of Educational Research, 13-B Page Hall, Ohio State University, Columbus 10. Pp. 14 (mimeo.). \$0.25.

This 200-item, unannotated, and probably complete listing of articles, books, and unpublished theses should be extremely valuable to teachers wishing to make a thorough study of all that has been written on this subject.

EDUCATION IN A TRANSITION COMMUNITY. *By Jean D. Grambs*. "Intergroup Education Pamphlets." National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, or any district office. Pp. 124. \$0.25.

The "Transition" of the title is that from segregated to integrated schools. Teachers and administrators in communities that are in transition or *may* be soon should not miss this!

FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE DECADE AHEAD AND HOW DO WE PAY FOR OUR SCHOOLS? National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools, 2 West 45th Street, New York 16. Pp. 62 and 72.

The first of these companion pamphlets points out the probable pupil load of our public schools in the next decade, and estimates the shortage of rooms and teachers. The second carries the subtitle *A Guide to Understanding School Finance*. They are practical helps for all actively working to prevent catastrophic overcrowding of our schools and overloading of teachers or the employment of substandard teachers. The Commission is a philanthropy.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. *By William Sloane*. King Crown Press (Columbia University). Pp. 251. \$5.00.

Specialists in the seventeenth century or in children's literature will be interested in this history and checklist and the first printed catalog of books for children, *The Young Christian's Library*.

## Nonfiction

SIR WALTER SCOTT: HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY. *By Hesketh Pearson*. Harper. \$4.00.

Scott is now creeping back into literary attention after a period of neglect. Pearson's biography is neither critical nor brilliant, but it is conscientious and extremely readable, and for a neophyte generation of readers it is a shorter and easier introduction than Lockhart's expansive *Life*. For those to whom Scott is an old friend, it provides a tonic opportunity to renew acquaintance with a writer whose lively life was embodied in his art, not divorced from it.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. *By G. B. Stern*. Macmillan. Pp. 142. \$2.75.

A brief, straightforward biography which includes considerable quotation from contemporary sources. The selection of details is excellent, but the studied informality of style, in spots, will irritate the high school as well as the adult reader. The vigorous personality which emerges is very different from the impression given by the long-haired, velvet-jacketed picture of Stevenson which has long hung on many school-room walls.

THE CHICAGO RENAISSANCE IN AMERICAN LETTERS. *By Bernard Duffey*. Michigan State College Press. Pp. 285. \$6.50.

A critical history of the period (1890-1920) during which the protests and rebel-

lions of "the Chicago group" of writers marked the germination of a new impulse in American letters. (Or maybe it was a marked turn—this is controversial.) Duffey views the renaissance objectively, writes vivaciously, and limns a clear picture. The chapters on Hamlin Garland, Edgar Lee Masters, and the early writings of Sandburg, Anderson, and Vachel Lindsay are particularly interesting.

**THE PRIVATE WORLD OF WILLIAM FAULKNER: THE MAN, THE LEGEND, THE WRITER.** By Robert Coughlan. Harper. \$2.75.

A revised, extended, and considerably improved version of an enthusiastic series of articles on Faulkner which appeared originally in *Life*, and which won for the author the 1954 Benjamin Franklin Award for the best magazine writing of the year in the field of biography. For the lay reader, not the specialist. Useful because it gathers together in one place considerable biographical material not otherwise readily accessible and relates this to Faulkner's writings.

**SUNSET AND EVENING STAR.** By Sean O'Casey. Macmillan. \$4.75.

The sixth and perhaps the last volume of O'Casey's autobiography. It covers about fifteen years, beginning with his return from America. Interesting accounts of life in England during World War II, his friendship with the Shaws, his dislike of Eliot's poetry. A good chapter on children and education, a rather sad reflection upon the weariness of old age: "It is only the young who possess the world."

**THE GOLDEN ECHO.** By David Garnett. Harcourt Brace. \$4.00. Pp. 271.

The reader hears "a golden echo" from a whole literary generation in this autobiography of the author of *Lady into Fox* and *Man in the Zoo*. Garnett's grandfather was Keeper of the Printed Books in the British Museum, his father was an editor, and his mother was Constance Garnett, a noted translator of Russian literature. The family doorbells were constantly being pulled by London literary folk—Henry James, Belloc, Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, W. H. Hudson, and

many more. The most exciting were the Russians, Kropotkin, etc. An unusual chapter recounts Garnett's observations of pre-revolutionary Russia on his visits there as a boy and young man.

**MAUPASSANT THE NOVELIST.** By Edward D. Sullivan. Princeton University Press. Pp. 199. \$4.00.

A fascinating book for anyone interested in the creative process. Maupassant's literary fame rests on the short stories he dashed off for a living. Little critical attention has been paid his carefully written novels. He was not thought to have theorized about his art. But he did. Like his hero in *Bel Ami* Maupassant started his career as a journalist, and it was in a series of anonymous newspaper articles that he sketched his theory of novelistic technique. Sullivan has disinterred them and in the first third of his book discusses these essays and relates Maupassant's theory to his practice. Maupassant emerges as an important novelist, and the whole process of novel writing is illumined.

**MOTIVE AND METHOD IN THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND.** Edited by Lewis Leary. Columbia University Press. Pp. 144. \$2.75.

The essays by Hugh Kenner and Forrest Read, Jr., which attempt directly to discover Pound's method and design, agree that this yet incomplete, very long poetic work is a mosaic of colorful bits from history, myth, and literature chosen and arranged for the meaningful pattern which they form. Guy Davenport and Sr. Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F., discuss Pound's use of Frobenius and Ovid. This description of the book is crudely oversimplified; to be grasped, the essays must be read with *The Cantos*. Greek, Latin, and Italian quotations are used freely, without translation.

**THE SELECTED ESSAYS OF WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS.** By William Carlos Williams. Random. \$4.50.

Prefaces, reviews, addresses, and essays on a wide variety of subjects are included. Many of them discuss well known poets: Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Carl Sandburg, E. E. Cummings, and others. There are also articles on artists and musicians. "Writers

of the American Revolution," "A Point for American Criticism," "The Simplicity of Disorder," and "A Warning to the New Writers" are of special interest.

**THE ALICE B. TOKLAS COOK BOOK.** By *Alice B. Toklas*. Harper. \$4.00.

Although there are 350 or more carefully stated recipes, they are rivaled by the fascinating tales about the famous people Alice B. (and Gertrude Stein) entertained in Paris, Spain, the United States, and on tours of other countries. A recipe is more than a recipe to A.B.T. There are observations on "the French approach," the selection and source of materials, servants, the table, etc. As one critic says, "A book of character, fine food, and tasty human observation."

**HAWTHORNE'S DR. GRIMSHAW'S SECRET.** Edited with an *Introduction and Notes* by *Edward H. Davidson*. Harvard University Press. Pp. 305. \$5.00.

*Dr. Grimshaw's Secret*, as first published nearly twenty years after Hawthorne's death, was a patchwork arranged by Julian Hawthorne. That edition has now been superseded by this complete publication of the preliminary sketches, the first draft (much interrupted by musing and planning not meant for publication) and the unfinished second draft still dotted with notes for later revision. It need be examined only for special purposes.

**SHAKESPEARE AND COMMON SENSE.** By *Erwin R. Hunter*. Christopher Publishing House. Pp. 312. \$4.00.

By Shakespeare's "common sense" the author means that "greatness which is solid and rational" which Shakespeare "invokes as a palliative against sentiment, pretense, and affection." A notable illustration is Jacques, whose commonsense offsets the unreal and fantastic situations of *As You Like It*. Hunter also believes that Shakespeare's knowledge and view of situations was not technical nor specialized, and cites, for example, Shakespeare's treatment of ghosts, which Hunter considers were introduced fundamentally for dramatic effect. He quickly puts Dover Wilson in the cellar on this point! All the major plays are con-

sidered in relation to the topic. Very readable—and sensible! Specialists probably will take issue.

**THE HOLY BIBLE IN BRIEF.** Edited by *James Reeves*. Julian Messner. Pp. 302. \$4.00.

By arranging the Old Testament according to types of literature, by omitting duplications and the less essential passages, the King James version is here made coherent and easily read. Particularly for young people—not children—who are unlikely to read the Bible through once or many times as their grandparents did, this is valuable. The "Table of Contents" and the "Index-Concordance" indicate quickly the location of any desired incident and of the most important quotations. It might well be required reading for every English major and every high school teacher of literature. Many devout persons say the reorganization gives added religious effect.

**MAHATMA GANDHI.** By *Vincent Sheean*. Knopf. \$2.50.

Vincent Sheean spent several months in India and knew Gandhi personally. He talked to him shortly before the assassination, which Sheean witnessed. Of the murdered Gandhi, Sheean says: "No less than Jesus of Nazareth he died for all mankind." A very complete story of his life: childhood, marriage, study in England, and devotion to his country.

**FRAGEBOGEN (The Questionnaire).** By *Ernst von Salomon*. Doubleday. Pp. 525. \$6.00.

This strange book is in form one man's answer to a long questionnaire used by the Allied Military Government of Germany to sift out the war criminals from the millions who followed Hitler's orders. In fact it is a skillful writer's defense of his own part in both the overthrow of the Weimar republic and World War II. It is cynical, anti-American, anti-Semitic, cool to Nazism, anti-Hohenzollern, and pro-Bismarck. It has sold 250,000 in Germany, where opinion of it is bitterly divided. If there are many like him, Germany is dangerous.



## Poetry, Drama, and Fiction

THE MANUSCRIPT POEMS OF A. E. HOUSMAN. Edited by Tom Burns Haber. University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 146. \$4.50.

Haber has studied intensively all that is left of Housman Notebooks A, B, C, and D after Laurence Housman took out eighteen pieces for "Additional Poems" (part of *My Brother, A. E. Housman*) and all the prose, which by the poet's will was to be destroyed. He has also examined the printers' copy of *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*. Here are the few complete poems not already published, the fragments, and the changed lines, and the editor's extended comment. Important for detailed study of Housman or of poetic composition.

A TREASURY OF IRISH FOLKLORE. Edited by Padraic Colum. Crown. \$5.00.

"The stories, traditions, legends, humor, wisdom, ballads, and songs of the Irish people. 300 stories, 30 songs." Contents are grouped under nine headings, of which only one, "Heroes of Old," goes back to the old Celtic legends. A wealth of Irish lore related by gifted story tellers and collected by an Irish teller of tales who first heard many of them related by his grandmother in her cottage in Ireland. A gay jacket, index, good paper and print. 620 pages.

A SORT OF ECSTASY. By A. J. M. Smith. Michigan State College Press, East Lansing. Pp. 55. \$2.50.

Canadians have for more than a decade regarded Smith as one of their very best poets. Most of this time he has been teaching at Michigan State College, but has never become so generally known here. He is a careful workman, who believes poetry should be intellectual as well as emotional and esthetic. The prevailing tone is one of gloom—in views of wars and threats of war.

FIVE PLAYS. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus, and Young. Pp. 541. \$6.50.

Wilson is best known as a critic and as the author of *Memoirs of Hecate County* and *The Shores of Light*, but these plays

deserve more attention than they seem to have received. They read extremely well and provocatively. The volume opens with "Cyprian's Prayer," a new play, set in the fourteenth century, in which Wilson utilizes a magician and his magic to satirize the current revival of interest in religion. The others have been published before. Three—"The Crime in the Whistler Room," "This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches," and "Beppo and Ruth"—document the Jazz Age. "The Little Blue Light" flickered briefly on Broadway four seasons ago.

THE DARK IS LIGHT ENOUGH. By Christopher Fry. Oxford University Press. \$2.75.

The improbable story of this free-verse play of the Hungarian revolt (1848) from Austria centers about a wholly admirable Austrian countess and her utterly worthless former son-in-law. She is supposedly an intellectual but exhibits chiefly genuine respect for every person and somewhat reckless physical and moral courage. Some of her fine speeches are addressed to her intellectual friends; some also delay and ultimately prevent a rebel colonel's search for Gettner. Finally she harbors that colonel, now a fugitive, and dies in her drawing room chair talking to the former son-in-law.

TRIAL. By Don M. Mankiewicz. Harper. \$3.50. Harper Prize Novel, 1955.

On the southwest coast of the United States, where there is more or less racial discrimination, a seventeen-year-old boy was accused of murdering a young girl. David Blake, a teacher (also an idealist), decided to practice law. So he undertook the defense of the boy. A legal battle ensued which involved many people and spread across the country. Communism, racialism, self-interest were pitted against idealism and honesty. (Incidentally many characters were on trial.) Long, important, but not pleasant.

THE OTHER PLACE AND OTHER STORIES OF THE SAME SORT. By J. B. Priestly. Harper. \$3.00.

Nine short stories in each of which the supernatural seems to play a part in everyday life. We may feel that we have seen this new landscape, man, or tower before. Priestley can make quite an effective story of such an experience. (Is it possible to live today and yet to have lived in the past—or to live again in the future?) Humor, satire, tongue-in-cheek narrative. Curious.

**THE SUN AT NOON.** By Charles Angoff. Beechhurst Press, Inc., 11 E. 36th Street, New York 16. Pp. 572. \$4.50.

Third volume of the author's study of a Jewish family—immigrants to America in the early years of 1900. *Journey to the Dawn* and *In the Morning Light* came first. The trials and successes of the third generation are stressed in the present volume. One young man is a Harvard graduate who must choose his career. He feels an inner conflict; "Jewish tradition was part of him," yet he felt the call of the outside world.

**PRIZE STORIES 1955: THE O. HENRY AWARDS.** Edited by Paul Engle and Hansford Martin. Doubleday. \$3.95.

The thirty-fifth volume of the O. Henry Award series presents the editors' eighteen "best" stories printed in American magazines in 1954, with an introduction and a short sketch of each author. "Looking backward" over the series, one notes a distinct change in theme and style in the recent stories. For instance, the first prize story, by Jean Stafford in the *New Yorker*, is just the recollections of two middle-aged sisters, now fairly comfortable and successful but unable "to close our minds to the past"—their unhappy childhood and youth.

**TEXAS FOLK AND FOLKLORE.** Edited by Mody C. Boatright, Wilson M. Hudson, Allen Maxwell. Texas Folklore Society Publication XXVI. Southern Methodist University Press. \$5.00.

Three cultures—those of the South, the West, and Mexico—are represented. The first chapter is "Indian Tales": "Oil" is the last. There are ballads, legends, and sayings as well as Negro songs, tales of reptiles and plants, and primitive "cures"—a very comprehensive collection. A few imaginative drawings. 356 pages.

**THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN, DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA.** By Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Translated by Samuel Putnam with Variant Readings, Variorum Notes, and an Introduction. Viking. Pp. 1043. \$4.95.

Except for a short-lived book-club edition, this is the first one-volume publication of the complete Samuel Putnam translation. Printed from the plates of the two-volume edition on thin but excellent paper, it is convenient for library or scholar's study shelf.

**THE RISE AND FALL OF MAYA CIVILIZATION.** By J. Eric S. Thompson. University of Oklahoma. \$5.00.

Recent archaeological discoveries throw new light on Mayan culture as it existed hundreds of years before the Spanish destroyed it. Illustrated.

**THE VIEW FROM POMPEY'S HEAD.** By Hamilton Basso. Doubleday. \$3.95.

Garvin Wales, a novelist now blind, is living in a small southern town, Pompey's Head, of which he is a native. Wales' wife says his royalty funds have been appropriated by his editor. Anson Page, New York lawyer and a native of the same town, is sent to investigate. He clears up the mystery, but is at once involved in the old life. (Shintoism?) Page finds that "you can't go home again." Exceedingly well told and well written.

**THE RAMAYANA.** As told by Aubrey Menen. Scribner. Pp. 276. \$3.50.

The author says he has omitted passages he thinks the Brahmins have added to the original during its 3000-year life, and has replaced them with what he imagines to have been in the original. This is an understatement. The frame story of Rama with the parenthetical long fables by the poet Valmiki make a book that almost has suspense and that is packed with cynical wisdom and wit.

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